

THE HELPER

A Handbook for Sunday School Teachers
and Parents

1898

EDITED BY

MARIAN PRITCHARD

(‘AUNT AMY’)

‘O’er wayward Childhood would’st thou hold firm rule,
And sun thee in the light of happy faces?
Love, Hope, and Patience, these must be thy graces,
And in thine own heart let them first keep school.’

—Coleridge.

SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION,
ESSEX HALL, ESSEX STREET, STRAND, W.C.

PRINTED BY ELSOM AND CO.
MARKET-PLACE, HULL.

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The Helper

TO THE READER,

In olden times it used to be the custom for the apprentices to stand at the door of their master's shop, crying, 'What d'ye lack? What d'ye lack?' to every passer-by; following up their cry by an offer to supply the needs of all, no matter what those needs might be.

Now I do not mean to follow the example of those youthful, hot-blooded apprentices, and pretend that this book will provide for *all* the wants of Sunday school teachers; I do not attempt to claim for it anything more than its title suggests; it will not do the work *for* the teacher, nothing can be a worthy substitute for that; but I do hope and trust it will be a **HELPER**. If those who are engaged in teaching, either at home or in the school, can find in its pages something that will help them to take a higher view of their work, something that will help them to interest and uplift their children, something that will help them to make the Sunday hour a happy and profitable one, this volume will have fully justified its existence. May this be so!

In the term Sunday school teacher may I be allowed to include the parents of our own families? For surely in every real home the training of children in the 'higher life' is a privilege which father and mother should never abandon altogether to others. At the same time there is so much to do in this busy world of ours, that the teaching is apt to lapse for want of time to map out a lesson. It will be a great satisfaction to all who have worked in the preparation of this book, if they can but feel that to such fathers and mothers who do desire to take up their high calling, the pages of **THE HELPER** may prove worthy of their name.

The contents of the volume may be roughly divided into two parts; that for the teachers to *give out* to their scholars, and that for the teachers to *take in* for themselves.

To the first belong all the Lesson Notes and kindred matter. Moral, religious and Biblical subjects each find a place, though the last of the three has the largest space allotted to it. And this, not because we cannot find illustrations of Divine Love and Wisdom as well in the daisy and the

star (if we look at them aright) as in the words of the ancient Scriptures, but because the Old and New Testaments have been so intimately associated for centuries with religious thought, that the majority of Sunday school teachers naturally turn to them for assistance in their work. But while in almost every branch of science we can find interesting manuals ready to help us, it is not so easy to learn how and what to teach, with regard to the Bible, when once we have given up the doctrine of plenary inspiration. In order to help teachers to show their scholars how much there is to love, and admire, and reverence in parts of those ancient books, various series of readings and lesson-notes have been prepared for their use.

I cannot imitate the old apprentices in 'reeling off' all the wares gathered in this collection, but I can thank the kind friends who have given us out of the treasure stores of their minds so much to think about and to take in to our hearts and minds. The names of many of the writers to be found in the Table of Contents are familiar to most of our readers; and on my own behalf, as well as on yours, I wish to express our gratitude to each one who has *helped* THE HELPER.

A few words on the other part of our work, that of 'taking in,' and I have done.

Some of our teachers, I wish we might say all of them, give both time and thought to the preparation of their lesson, and yet sometimes they

are not successful. I knew such a one; each morning saw him in his place, and each day he had a carefully prepared lesson before him. But the result was most disheartening; the small boys would not listen, and they played all sorts of pranks. Was it that they were so very naughty? No, they were neither better nor worse than most small urchins. How was it that the teacher failed, then? It was just because, while he had thought about his lesson, he had not quite sufficiently considered the nature of the boys who were to receive it.

Now if a carpenter wanted to drive in a nail, he would first look at the material into which it was to be driven, and then choose a suitable nail. Otherwise he might either split the wood in one case, or only spoil the nail without getting it through at all. True, it is not so easy for us to understand the material on which we have to work as it is for the carpenter, for the depths of the child's mind are hard to fathom, its limitations difficult to understand; but we can learn something of these if we treat the subject with the patience and reverent study due to it; and therefore we have introduced a few papers on Child Study, and a story or two bearing upon the matter, in the hope that these will set our readers thinking, more than they do at present, of the necessity for fitting what they have to teach, to the capacities of the very complex little creatures whom they are doing their best to influence for good.

THE EDITOR.

Our Frontispiece.

PORTRAIT OF JAMES MARTINEAU,
LL.D., D.D., D.C.L., Litt. D.



IN a handbook devoted to the assistance of those who earnestly desire to lead the children and young people of the present generation 'upwards and onwards,' it is both pleasant and fitting to be able to place at its beginning the portrait of our venerable friend and leader, Dr. James Martineau.

It is, indeed, most delightful to know that, in spite of his ninety-two years, our teacher has lost none of his keen interest in this work, none of his loving sympathy with those who are carrying it on to-day; and we gladly take this opportunity of expressing our grateful appreciation of his kindly words of counsel and encouragement, which were contained in his letter bidding us God-speed in our new venture. The following extract from this letter will show on what points Dr. Martineau feels that the Sunday school teacher should lay the strongest emphasis; and we are sure that all who desire to train their children to a loftier conception of life and its manifold responsibilities, duties, and privileges, will be anxious to read, weigh, and carefully consider the opinion of one who has had so long and rich an experience in influencing the thoughts and lives of others.

Referring to what should be the

Model Lessons of the teacher, he writes: 'Foremost in this class I regard those which, without book, and from simple experience, tell a young child, as a mother would, of an ever-present living and loving God, who knows our silent thoughts and lets us know whether they are such as He approves, and makes us ashamed if they are mean and greedy. The sense of *Duty* wakes to this appeal and readily becomes a Divine communion, which being close at hand, finds its natural language in words of Prayer. Religion, thus reached as the transcendent interpretation of Moral Law, comes to us as the intuitive revelation of inward experience. It is its own divine messenger, abundantly appealed to in the teachings of Jesus, as an inspiration denied to none. It needs no Scripture attestation, being just as much a present fact to *us* as it was to him. As such it should be brought home to the child's consciousness, precisely as it is presented in Mr. Armstrong's excellent little book, *God and the Soul*, in which the intimations of conscience are identified with the very touch of God. The Divine Infinitude implied is but the moral counterpart of the immensity of space assumed in all Geometry, and has no more wonder for the child's ideal faculty. The primary teaching, I submit, must be from and to immediate personal experience of what is given for man to think and know, and till *that* is found, no test can reveal to him any invisible relation in which he

stands. We cannot wait for 'a Bible' to introduce us to a Theism which it necessarily presupposes. . . .

'In recasting your *Helper*, I think it would be well to aim at making it an instrument for not simply developing and widening intelligence, but even more for reaching the conscience, and deepening the springs of reverent affection and self-sacrificing surrender to calls of duty.'

Nor only those above us on the height
With love and praise and reverence I greet,
Not only those who walk in paths of light

With glad untiring feet ;
These, too, I reverence, toiling up the slope,
And resting not upon their rugged way,
Who plant their feet on faith and cling to
hope,
And climb as best they may.

Oh ! struggling souls, be brave and full of
cheer,
Nor let your holy purpose swerve or break ;
The way grows smoother and the light more
clear

At every step you take.
So, in the upward path God's boundless love
Supports you evermore upon your way ;
You cannot fail to reach the heights above
Who climb as best you may !

EUDORA S. BUMSTEAD.

'I CONSIDER it true humility, when one has failed in anything, not to brood over the failure,—life may be better employed,—but to try again until one succeeds. One does that in learning a new game of amusement. How much more in the game of life.'

EDWARD MAITLAND.

The True Spirit of Sunday School Work.

AN ADDRESS TO TEACHERS.



IT must be assumed that every one who becomes a Sunday school teacher does so through a real desire to be helpful in the work ; but perhaps not everyone sits down to count the cost, and contemplate seriously the duties which he is undertaking. The work is distinctly religious, being intended to further that kingdom of righteousness and truth which Christ gave up his life to establish ; and, accordingly, though intellectual attainment is highly desirable, and the earnest teacher will seek the best intellectual preparation that is available, the indispensable condition of real success is a surrender of self to the spirit of Christ, and a willingness to offer any sacrifice which the adequate fulfilment of the assumed task may entail. Although the kind and affectionate teacher will in due time have a rich reward, nevertheless there must be self-sacrifice ; some pleasures must be renounced ; some time must be set apart that might be devoted to one's own profit or amusement ; there will probably be disappointments ; and there may be causes of offence which will wound the self-love, but which ought to be borne with a patient cheerfulness, and turned into a wholesome discipline of character. If he who would be a teacher is not prepared for these

things, but intends to render only a half-hearted service, he had better take more time for consideration and for prayer before he enters on his task. 'No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.' If we go to our weekly duty with averted eyes, or if we keep entirely aloof whenever some ephemeral pleasure attracts us, or an indolent regard for our own ease solicits us, we shall destroy our best lessons by our own evil example, and shall never be able to speak with quickening power to the conscience and the heart.

I fear we do not always look upon these voluntary labours in their true light. We sometimes think that, because they are voluntary, they remain at our own disposal, and no one has a right to expect more than we choose at any time to render. But in truth, when once we undertake a particular task, we renounce, to that extent, our liberty, and place ourselves under an engagement. A class assembles and finds its teacher absent; is not a wrong inflicted on the members of that class? The superintendent comes, perhaps at the cost of a severe personal strain, and that strain is increased because the school is disorganised and he is without the support he is entitled to expect. And for ourselves, our character is lowered and our sense of duty weakened. To me it seems that there is a peculiar sanctity of obligation attached to these voluntary labours because they are not rendered in obedience to man, and we are responsible to

no earthly tribunal, but we act in obedience to the word of God in our inmost heart, and his solemn award is the only judgment that is passed upon us.

Without this self-consecration we must labour in vain; for I count it vain unless we reach the deep sources of character, and kindle that living faith which brings the soul into communion with God. True, we are not worthy; but we are not therefore to relinquish the battle, for it is not we that fight against sin, but the grace of God that works in us. To feel that we can of our own selves do nothing, and yet that we must labour on with unwearying trust in God, and in simple self-abandonment to the leading of his spirit within us,—this is the secret of real power. And it is well that we should be often in weakness and fear, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

What remains, then, dear teachers, but that we seek in humble prayer for a far deeper love, a love simple and pure as Christ's? Effort, however painful, constancy, however unremitting, are not enough. There is a self-sacrifice which is still tainted with pride and self-will. This is not acceptable to God, and cannot produce the rarest fruits. What God requires is the pure devotion of the heart, an inward surrender, and our outward sacrifices are precious only so far as they manifest that spirit. Zeal without love may injure rather than bless. More than zeal, which is often noisy and

full of self-assertion, we need a calm, gentle love, a love prepared to enjoy or to suffer, to labour or to wait, to ascend a throne or a cross, as it may please our Father. Love brings us into communion with God; for 'God is love,' and he that loveth 'dwelleth in God, and God in him,' and if our hearts, like that of Jesus, were made perfect in love, the spirit of God would speak through us, and eternal truth and wisdom would glow upon our lips. Love is the power that redeems men. It alone has tones that reach the soul. It is the one spell that the world cannot for ever resist. When it is despised and rejected, it but shows its might more triumphantly. When it drops into the ground to die, it is only that it may rise again to an everlasting dominion.

JAMES DRUMMOND.

The Two Students.

A PARABLE.

TWO scholars, on their way from Pennaiel to Salamanca, being thirsty and fatigued, sat down by a spring they met on the road; there, while they rested themselves after having quenched their thirst, they perceived by accident, on a stone that was even with the surface of the earth, some letters that were already half effaced by time and by the feet of flocks

that came to water at the fountain. Having washed it, they read these words in the Castilian tongue: 'Here is interred the soul of Peter Garcias.'

The younger of the two students, being a pert coxcomb, no sooner read this inscription, than he cried with a loud laugh, 'A good joke, i' faith! here is interred the soul—a soul interred! What fool could be the author of such a wise epitaph?'

So saying he got up and went away, while his companion, who was blessed with a greater share of penetration, said to himself, 'There is certainly some mystery in this affair; I'll stay in order to unriddle it.'

Accordingly, his comrade was no sooner out of sight than he began to dig with his knife all round the stone; and succeeded so well that he got it up, and found beneath it a leathern purse containing a hundred ducats, and a card, on which was written the following sentence in Latin: 'Whosoever thou art, who hast wit enough to discover the meaning of the inscription, inherit my money, and make a better use of it than I have done.'

LE SAGE.

'In the first place, my dear, it's my belief that when a man's not a fool in general, when you do understand him, it's a wise thing to think he's not a fool when you don't understand him, but to try to make out what he does mean.'

—*Diary of Mrs. Kitty Trevelyan,*

New Year's Address.

'She hath done what she could.'—*Mark* xiv. 8.

'Let us be content, in work,
To do the thing we can, and not presume
To fret because it's little.'

E. B. BROWNING.—'Aurora Leigh.'



HE hath done what she could.

Who was *she*? And what had she done? Those are the first things we want to know.

Well, if you read the story in Mark's Gospel (xiv. 3-9) you will see that no name is given to her. It simply says 'a woman.' And in Matthew's Gospel (xxvi. 6-13) as in Mark's, no name is given. But in John's Gospel (xii. 3 and xi. 2) we are distinctly told that her name was Mary, and that she was the good sister of Martha and Lazarus. The story that is told in Luke's Gospel (vii. 36-48) though often mixed up with this story, does not seem to be the same. And so I think we shall be safe in saying that she who did what she could—she whom Jesus praised—was Mary of Bethany.

And what had Mary done? Let us see:

Near a mountain-top, on a sort of sheltered shelf, in a lovely hollow like a nest, was a little village. So many

date trees grew there that the village was known as Place-of-Dates,—Bethany. In one of the best white houses, shaded by vines and palm trees, lived two grown-up sisters and a brother. Lazarus, the brother, was well-to-do, and his two sisters kept house for him. Martha was the name of one, and Mary seems to have been the younger.

Now these two sisters were very different,—as is often the case. Martha was good at things which Mary couldn't do so well. And Mary was good at things which Martha perhaps didn't quite see the need of. For example, Martha could manage a house, could order or get ready the dinner, could see that all the rooms were cleaned in the right way and at the proper time, and could attend to a hundred other every-day things in thorough house-keeping style. Mary, too, in her own quiet way might be able to do, or see to, all these things; if needs be, though not half so well as her sister could,

Mary was perhaps better at making the rooms beautiful and comfortable,—better at listening to her brother's daily worries and difficulties over his business,—whatever it was,—easing his mind by her affectionate sympathy;—and better at helping visitors to feel at home whenever they came to that cosy house at Bethany.

There was one distinguished visitor who sometimes came to that mountain village home. He could never stay long. His work was too pressing. This visitor was the greatest, and wisest, and best man in all the land. It was none other than the great Teacher, Jesus Christ. And Mary, and perhaps Lazarus too, found these few short visits of the good Christ to their house so precious that they never wished to be a minute out of his company while he was there, or to miss a word he said.

Martha, it may be, was different. I mean, she might not be so anxious to hear all that Jesus had to say. And, indeed, we cannot blame her for just being as God had made her. Nay, there is much to praise her for. The one thing she could do well, it seems, was to get a supper ready. And *that* she did. And I have no doubt it was a good one! Yes, and if you look at the story (*Luke* x. 38-42) I think you will see that Jesus himself did *not* blame Martha for not listening to him at the time, or for just attending to the one thing which *she* could do best. No, but Martha, in her hurry and flurry over the supper pre-

parations—which, after all, in that country were a very simple thing—Martha, I say, seems to have bustled into the room where Christ was and begun upbraiding Mary for listening to him, and even asked him to make Mary do as she was doing. Then Jesus gently chided Martha,—for what? For not attending to one thing at a time, and letting other people do the same. ‘Martha, Martha,’ said he, ‘thou art careful and troubled about *many* things. Only one thing at a time is needful. Mary has chosen one thing, you have chosen one thing, each as she is fitted. As it happens Mary’s choice is the higher, even as the soul is more than the body. But each thing has its place. Do not blame your sister, then, if she cannot be like you.’

Now that little incident lets us see something of the kind of girl or woman that Mary was. No doubt she was shy and sensitive, quiet and thoughtful. ‘Her eyes were homes of silent prayer.’¹ She had a hunger for goodness, and when this Good Man, who liked her brother so very much (*John* xi. 36) called at their house on his way to or from the city of Jerusalem, is it any wonder that she should wish to learn all she could from him?

And was this the thing that Jesus praised her for in the text we have taken,—‘she hath done what she could?’ Ah, no! That is another story, and much more serious, and

¹ Tennyson’s *In Memoriam*.

even more beautiful. This is how it was:

The Good Teacher had only a few more days to live. His enemies were going to kill him. They had sworn to do it somehow. They were plotting for it now.

These enemies were in the city of Jerusalem. Bethany, you know, was along the mountain road, about two miles east of the city. And Jesus had just arrived at Bethany on his way to Jerusalem. But he was not going to the city for a day or two. He had been travelling and teaching all the way up from the north. And so he was going to rest a little in quiet Bethany.

The people in Bethany, no doubt, knew that 'the chief priests and scribes' in the city were plotting to take away his life. They would, I dare say, try to keep him from going. A rich man in Bethany named Simon, who had been cured of leprosy, made a feast or banquet for Jesus and his disciples. As they ate and talked, they lay upon cushions on the floor, or upon couches around the tables.

And what of Mary? Had she also heard the dreadful news that wicked men were determined to put her Great Master to some cruel death? What would she feel? What could she do? She could do no great thing, such as dying for him, or even pleading for his life in Jerusalem. She, a woman, would not be listened to if she tried.

But see! They sold in the city a very, very costly kind of scent or per-

fume. It was usually put up in precious little bottles or flasks of clear and beautifully marked white alabaster. In an impulse of affection and reverence Mary brought one of these, and, as he reclined at Simon's table, poured the lovely perfume on the head of Jesus. It filled the house with sweetness.

What did she mean by so doing? We cannot quite tell. It was her heart that did it. Some have supposed that Mary meant to say that, whatever others might think of him, *she* regarded Jesus as a *king* of the Good Life. But we cannot tell for certain. How surprised they would all be in Simon's house! The disciples would look at one another in amazement. 'Judas Iscariot even grumbled at Mary's impulse, and called it 'waste.' But Jesus checked him, for he saw that it came from a loving heart. Judas was looking at what he could have *got* for it. Jesus was looking at what Mary had so freely *given*. And so, whatever her meaning, he praised her motive, and put a tender meaning of his own into it. As if he said: 'She cannot save me from death, yet her loving deed will make death less bitter to me, for "she hath done what *she* could." Yea and throughout the world, whenever this tale is told, folk shall fondly say of this woman, "she did what she could."'

She did what she could!—Would not that be praise worth earning? Might we not each take it now as a motto worth living for? It may be nothing

clever. It may be nothing grand. But then our everyday lives, as a rule, are not made up of grand or clever things. We want something that is simple, and sturdy, and possible. And here it is: You are just to do what you honestly can. On Abraham Lincoln's tomb are the words, 'he was faithful.' And that was all he wished. He did what he could. 'No, I can't do much now,' said a dear good woman, 'I'm too old; but I can pray to God, and hem the dusters!' We just want to get into the habit of feeling that our daily work is 'the thing we can,' and 'do' it! A wise teacher once said, to a bevy of school-girls who were complaining that there were no great things for them to do in life, 'Take the motto of the artist Apelles, "*No day without a line*," and remember that, though a line may be only a twelfth of an inch or be as long as the equator, no one is expected to draw one beyond the measure of his ability.' A woman, whose life has been long and chequered, said lately: 'Nothing has given me more courage to face every day's duties and troubles than a few words spoken to me when I was a girl by my old father. He was the village doctor. I came into his surgery, where he was mixing medicine, one day, looking cross and ready to cry.

'What is the matter, Mary?'

'I'm tired! I've been making beds and washing dishes all day, and every day, and what good does it do? To-morrow the beds will be

to make and the dishes to wash over again.'

'Look, my child,' he said, 'do you see those little empty bottles. They are insignificant, cheap things, of no value in themselves, but in one I put a deadly poison, in another a sweet perfume, in a third a healing medicine. Nobody cares for the bottles; it is that which they carry that kills or cures. Your daily work, the dishes washed or the floors swept, are homely things and count for nothing in themselves; but it is the anger, or sweet patience, or zeal, or high thoughts, that you put into them that will last. These make your life.'

Yes, yes! It is the same with us all, young or old. It is the spirit we put into our work that makes all the difference. Who can earn higher praise,—be she queen upon a throne or little girl at school, be he Prime Minister of England or only a factory boy,—who can earn higher praise than this: 'She hath done what she could.' 'He hath done what he could.' And we can all earn that! So we will start this new year with that motto, and

'Let us be content, in work,
To do the thing we can, and not presume
To fret because it's little.'

J. J. WRIGHT.

'THE best perfection of a religious man is to do common things in a perfect manner. A constant fidelity in small things is a great and heroic virtue.'

—A saying of St. Bonaventura,
quoted in Longfellow's *Diary*.



Our Sunday Readings.

OUR plan of readings for this year has been to take twelve subjects, following, so far as practicable, those which naturally connect themselves with the different months, but also which shall lead by gradual steps towards the all-embracing thought that God our Heavenly Father is all-in-all, and that in Him we live, and move and have our being.

We are hoping that this series may be of use in many ways. For father and mother who like to draw their children round them for a weekly half-hour's chat on the higher life, for the Sunday school teacher who wants to teach with a certain amount of system through the year, or for the one who only desires to take a subject which will cover a month of Sundays; for all these the following readings are designed. We have also had another class of Sunday school work in view; namely, where the minister or superintendent takes the whole school himself once a month, while on the other

Sundays he has to rely on teachers who come regularly, but who cannot spare the time, and who perhaps lack sufficient culture, to prepare a lesson for their class. In response to an appeal for help from one such school, we suggest that the teachers should take the selected readings each Sunday until the last in the month, when the minister or superintendent will take that and with it work into one whole the lesson for the month. If after that service the teachers would remain for half an hour, the readings upon the following subject might be gone over in conclave, and illustrations and suggestions could then be freely given and received. If minister and teachers have the subjects for the twelve months before them they are much more likely to think about the teaching during the week; and if all would carry a penny note book in their pockets with the twelve subjects set down at the heading of as many pages, they would find several stray thoughts and anecdotes worthy of being set down ready for use, as illustration or example. In this way the teachers would be really preparing their lesson without any appreciable amount of time being taken up.

Of course in every reading there are many points that may be accentuated; but in following a sequence of ideas, it is necessary to look at the special one which bears on the subject; for this reason we have put a few lines of explanation after each reading, which should help to focus them into one connected whole.

JANUARY.¹

Subject.—OUR WORK.

'What your hearts find good in doing,
Do you then with all your might;
Though the work be plain and lowly
It is blessed in His sight.

O be patient in your striving!
Learn to labour and to wait;
And the Father's love shall lead you
When the way is steep and strait.'

Mrs. Leland.

1st Sunday.—RUTH ii. Helping in daily duties.

2nd Sunday.—MATTHEW xxv. 14-29.
Our talents are not equal; but our duty consists in doing the best with what we have.

3rd Sunday.—1 COR. xii. 4-xiii. 1. We are not to envy those who have higher gifts than we have, nor look with scorn on those who are less favoured than ourselves. Browning says truly, 'All service ranks alike with God.'

4th Sunday.—1 KINGS v. Solomon gathers together material for the building of the house of the Lord. 'The best for God' was his motto for the earthly temple; shall we not give our best also in a spiritual sense?

5th Sunday.—ACTS vi. 8-vii. 1, linked on by some such words as these, 'And Stephen answered them with clearness and courage,'—to ACTS vii. 54-60. Stephen's work of testifying

to what he felt to be true brought him, what? Death. Yes, it did; but failure? No. For the seed dropped into the heart of the young man standing by, and brought forth noble fruit; for Saul, or Paul, did more to spread Christianity than probably any other single man.

'Let us, then, our lives employ
In the works of righteousness;
We may no rewards enjoy,
No fair words our work may bless.
Though the world may crucify,
And our hopes be crushed and slain,
Howsoever deep they lie,
Our good deeds will rise again.'

F. W. Beckett.

It will be seen that the five readings all bear upon our work, our duties.

Beginning with daily duties (Ruth's gleanings), we pass on to the acknowledgment that the gifts bestowed upon us are not equal (the Talents); that we must not envy one another on account of this (Paul's parable of The Body), but give of our best to God (Solomon's preparation for the Temple). Finally, that good work *will* bear good fruit, even though the worker may receive no personal benefit therefrom; nay, he may be reviled and persecuted (Stephen's death). I have preferred to use this illustration, rather than one which shows a more tangible success, because, though we feel that in the long run goodness must conquer, for God *is* good, yet the well-worn proverb 'honesty is the best policy,' in its popular sense, is neither invariably true as regards individual success, nor is it a worthy motive for our guidance.

'Fill up each hour with what will last;
Buy up the moments as they go;
The life above, when this is past,
Is the ripe fruit of life below.'

H. Bonar.

¹ In each monthly number of the S.S.A. magazine, *Young Days*, for 1898, a story or paper bearing on the subject for the month will be given.

FEBRUARY.

Subject.—OBEDIENCE.

'O give me Samuel's ear,
The open ear, O Lord!
Alive and quick to hear
Each whisper of thy word:
Like him to answer at thy call,
And to obey Thee first of all.'

J. D. Burns.

1st Sunday.—ROMANS xiii. 1-10. Obedience to those placed in authority over us.

2nd Sunday.—1 SAMUEL iii. 1-19. Obedience to the Voice of God.

3rd Sunday.—MATT. xxi. 23-31, ending at 'The first.' And also JAMES i. 22-26. Obedience in truth, not merely in words.

4th Sunday.—PSALM cxix. 1-16. 'Delighting' in the commands of God.

'I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches. . . .

I will delight myself in thy statutes; I will not forget thy word.'

These selections will enable the teacher to take the subject of obedience from its elementary stage, the duty of obedience to parents, teachers and governors; then obedience to the Highest, God Himself. This obedience is to be real, not superficial; and lastly, we must learn to take *delight* in 'Thy laws,' and obey because it is our joy to do so. 'If ye love me, keep my commandments.'

MARCH.

Subject.—FAITH AND FAITHFULNESS.

'Tis faith in God, 'tis faith in man,
Tis faith in truth and beauty;
In freedom's might, and reason's right,
And all-controlling duty.'

F. W. Chadwick.

1st Sunday.—MATT. xiii. 3-8 and 18-23. The act of sowing implies faith in the laws of God. This thought is not, perhaps, so much dwelt upon as it should be.

'Whoever plants a seed beneath the sod,
And waits to see it push away the clod,—
He trusts in God.'

2nd Sunday.—2 KINGS v. 1-14. Personal trust. The faith of the little maid in Elisha, leads the mighty general to go to him and, when Naaman trusts sufficiently to obey, he is cured of his leprosy.

3rd Sunday.—HEBREWS xi. 23-40. The meaning of the word faithful, as used here, is shown by a reference to some of the heroes of olden time. Faithful to the voice of God within, they obeyed it in spite of hardship and trials.

4th Sunday. PSALM xxiii. Absolute security because 'The Lord is my shepherd—he leadeth me.'

1st. The special lesson (in connection with the subject of this month) to be drawn from the Parable of the Sower, is the confidence men have in the working of God's laws in the physical world. It is good to emphasize that these are just as truly his laws, as those governing the moral and spiritual part of our being. The laws obeyed—the good seed put into good ground and properly tended—the harvest may be looked forward to with confidence. The laws having been found *trustworthy*, men come to *trust* them.

2nd. (a) The trust of the little captive maiden in Elisha illustrates the blessing of faith and confidence in trustworthy people. *Men* who are trustworthy come to be trusted. (b) But until Naaman had sufficient faith, or confidence, in Elisha to obey him entirely, no good could result from their intercourse.

3rd. If it is well to trust a good man, it is still better to trust the voice of God within us.

'When duty whispers low "*Thou must,*"

The youth replies "*I can.*"'

Thus did Moses and thus also doth every faithful soul.

4th. If we acknowledge the lordship of the laws of Nature and of Duty, shall we not acknowledge the Maker of these laws, and faithfully love and trust Him in every stage of our life?

'All wise, All mighty, and All good !

In Thee I firmly trust ;

Thy ways unknown or understood,

Are merciful and just !

Montgomery.

APRIL.

Subject.—HOPE.

'And as, in sparkling majesty, a star
Gilds the bright summit of some gloomy
cloud,
Brightening the half-veil'd face of heaven
afar ;
So, when dark thoughts my boding spirit
shroud,
Sweet Hope, celestial influence round me
shed,
Waving thy silver pinions o'er my head.'

Keats.

1st Sunday.—PSALM xlii. (to be read from Revised Version if possible). The Psalmist speaks to his own sad heart and bids it hope because God is there, though clouds of sorrow hide the brightness of his presence.

2nd Sunday (Easter).—ISAIAH xxxv.
The hope of gladness for the world,

when men recognize the glory and the excellency of 'our God.'

3rd Sunday.—ROMANS viii. 14-28. The hope of growing more worthy to be called the children of God will help us to bear patiently and to strive earnestly.

4th Sunday.—ROMANS xii. Our duties to God and our neighbour include the spirit of hopefulness.

We hope *because* we believe in God ; believing in Him we must believe in the ultimate triumph of good ; these are our grounds for a lively and reasonable hope. It is well to show how hope comforts the true heart even in the saddest trials (1st Sunday) ; how it sets before us a beautiful ideal (2nd Sunday) ; and a worthy incentive (3rd Sunday) ; and how teachers of olden time thought that to rejoice in hope (4th Sunday) was part of our duty, and not only a mere delusion of an idle wish, with which the real Spirit of Hope is too often confused.

MAY.

Subject.—PREPARATION.

'For the structure that we raise
Time is with materials filled ;
Our to-days and yesterdays
Are the blocks with which we build.
Build to-day, then, strong and sure,
With a firm and ample base ;
And ascending and secure,
Shall to-morrow find its place.'

1st Sunday.—1 SAMUEL xvii. 15-24 and 32-52. David had prepared himself for great deeds by doing his duty in his daily work. Note his bravery with the beasts of prey ; his care for the flocks, which made him careful to leave them with a keeper before he went away. Also his pro-

iciency in the use of the sling must have been the result of much practice.

2nd Sunday.—1 KINGS iii. 5-15 and iv. 29-34. Solomon's preparation for his kingly duties. Prayer for wisdom.

3rd Sunday.—PSALM cxii. He who has prepared aright for his life by the keeping of God's laws, will have his heart established, and 'shall not be afraid.'

4th Sunday.—MATT. xxv. 1-13. Parable of the Virgins. Those who fail to *prepare* must expect disappointment.

5th Sunday (Whitsunday).—LEV. xxiii. 9-22 and DEUT. xvi. 9-17 refer to the Feast of Pentecost (*i.e.* 50). Either one or both passages may be read. The early Christian Church used this festival to celebrate the ingathering of souls into the Church rather than the ingathering of the corn, and new members were baptized at this time. Thus Whitsunday (so called from the white garments worn at the ceremony) fitly concludes this month's subject of Preparation.

Here we have the value of preparation shown in (1) the life of the shepherd boy, and (2) in that of the king. (3) When we have learned to trust God and to obey his laws, we shall be prepared to face every earthly sorrow and danger. (4) If we have failed to make proper preparation either through indolence, want of thought, or want of will, we must not be surprised if we are shut out from loving service when the time comes. (5) Filled with a feeling of thankfulness for all the blessings of Heaven, we should surely desire to give of our best to God; and in order that we may do this we must prepare for future duties by carefully

fulfilling our present ones, and by consecrating ourselves to the service of God.

'Do right; and God's recompense to you will be the power of doing more right. . . . Love, and God will pay you with the capacity of more love.'—*F. W. Robertson.*

'Sow an act, and you reap a habit;
Sow a habit, and you reap a character;
Sow a character, and you reap a destiny.'

JUNE.

Subject.—JOY.

'Sing, let us sing, with a right good will!

Cheerily, cheerily singing!

Helping the world with joy to fill,

With pleasant voices ringing.'

E. J. Troup.

1st Sunday.—PSALM xxxiii. Rejoicing in the Lord, because the earth is full of his lovingkindness.

2nd Sunday.—ISAIAH xl. 9-31. There is joy in the land when the people know that their Ruler is wise and good; there should be joy in our hearts when we realise that the Ruler of the universe is all-wise and all-loving.

3rd Sunday.—PROVERBS xv. 13-23. We should show our joy by a cheerful countenance, and should not lose heart even in the evil day.

4th Sunday.—LUKE xv. 1-10. We shall enter into the joy of the Lord when we accept our glorious privilege of pointing the way 'to the kingdom' to those who have strayed or who are lost.

One who truly believes in God's power and his love, *ought* to be cheerful and full of a deep, abiding joy. It is not meet that such 'glad tidings' should be delivered with a long, gloomy countenance. 'The Lord ruleth, let the whole earth be filled with joy!' should be the burden of our song.

This is the thought of the Psalmist and Isaiah. In the collections of sayings gathered in *Proverbs* the duty of looking at the bright side is emphasized. Finally, the best joy of all comes of helping those who are wandering from the path of right and beauty.

'He that loveth God runneth, rejoiceth, and is free; he giveth all for all, and hath all in all; because he resteth in the Highest, from whom all good proceedeth,'—*Imit. of Christ*.

JULY.

Subject.—COURAGE AND STEADFASTNESS.

'Press on, press on! ye sons of light,
Untiring in your holy fight,
Still treading each temptation down,
And battling for a brighter crown.

Press on, press on! through toil and woe
Calmly resolved to triumph go;
And make each dark and threatening ill
Wield but a higher glory still.'

W. Gaskell.

1st Sunday.—1 CHRON. xi. 1-19. Bodily courage of David's mighty men. They risk their lives to satisfy David's wish. David honours their act of devotion, and pours forth the water as a worthy offering to the Lord.

2nd Sunday.—JOSHUA i. 1-9. Joshua's charge to the people before entering Canaan.

3rd Sunday.—DANIEL iii. 8-30. Steadfastness in refusing to worship the king as God, and courage to bear the consequences. It will be well to tell the scholars that this book was written at the time when the Jews were being greatly persecuted, and was intended as a kind of parable story to confirm them in a steadfast maintenance of their religious faith.

4th Sunday.—PSALM xxvii.

5th Sunday.—MARK xiv. 32-50. Note the steadfastness of Jesus and the courage with which he met his captors. 'Father, thy will, not mine be done,' was his earnest prayer, and with this absolute dependence upon God in his heart, he was strengthened to crown his beautiful life by a death no less beautiful because it was so nobly borne.

Again we take the subject first from its physical side, and gradually work toward the spiritual. The selections, I think, carry with them a sufficient sequence and need therefore no further notes. 'I will not fail thee nor forsake thee; . . . only be thou strong and very courageous.'

AUGUST.

Subject.—LOVE.

'O Love divine and tender,
That through our homes doth move,
Veiled in the softest splendour
Of holy, household love.

J. S. B. Monsell.

1st Sunday.—1 SAM. xvii. 55-xviii. 9, and xix. 1-5. Love between friends—David and Jonathan.

2nd Sunday.—1 COR. xii. 29-31 and xiii. Love is the most precious of all possessions.

3rd Sunday.—GAL. v. 13-vi. 2. The fruits of love.

4th Sunday.—LUKE x. 25-37. A practical example of a loving spirit.

These selections tell their own story and form one complete whole.

'Love is a great thing; yea, a great and mighty good; by itself it maketh light that which is burdensome, and that sweet and tasteful which is bitter. Than love, there is nothing better in heaven or on earth.'—*Imit. of Christ*.

SEPTEMBER.

Subject.—TRUTH.

'Dare to be true. Nothing can need a lie ;
A fault that needs it most
Grows two thereby.'—*G. Herbert.*

1st Sunday.—PSALM xv. and JER. ix.

1-9. Who is worthy to dwell with the Lord? The Psalmist answers, giving the characteristics of the righteous man, one of the first of which is that he 'speaketh the truth from his heart.' As a reverse side of the picture we have the wailing of Jeremiah over the evils which have come unto Jerusalem, because of the people's want of truth, which he here so graphically describes.

2nd Sunday.—2 KINGS v. 15-27. Remind the class of the story of the little captive maid (March reading) and then read the account of Gehazi's falsehood and punishment.

3rd Sunday.—ZECH. viii. 3-17. A description of the happiness, when Jerusalem shall have won for herself the name of The City of Truth. A companion picture to that reading on the 1st Sunday, from Jeremiah.

4th Sunday.—EPI. iv. 1-7 ; 11-25. Those who own Jesus as their leader must speak the truth, 'for we are members one of another;' and moreover we must speak the truth 'in love.' This point should be well emphasized. As it is well put in *The Rambler*, 'Whosoever makes truth disagreeable, commits high treason against virtue.'

It will be well to dwell on the impossibility of people doing business together

properly without truth; the man may deceive another once, but he will find that that customer will shun him in future. To elder scholars reference may be made to the banking system of the country, which has its foundation on mutual trust. Unhappily the value of truth has not yet been thoroughly learnt, and indeed it is one of the hardest virtues to practise; but when the world is made up of Cities of Truth the universal happiness will be quite equal to Isaiah's description.

OCTOBER (After Harvest).

Subject.—THANKFULNESS.

'We thank Thee then, O Father,
For all things bright and good :
The seedtime and the harvest,
Our life, our health, our food ;
Accept the gifts we offer
For all thy love imparts,
And, what Thou most desirest,
Our humble, thankful hearts.'

M. Claudius.

'It is good that a man should rejoice, and enjoy the fruit of his labour; for it is the gift of God.'

1st Sunday.—LUKE xvii. 7-18. Daily courtesies and words of thanks should be given to those who are working for us (vv. 7-9). Out of the ten lepers only one returned to thank Jesus, and he was a Samaritan, one of the nation regarded by the Jews with great disfavour.

2nd Sunday.—MATT. xviii. 23-35. The unthankful servant. The best way to show gratitude is to 'pass on' a kindly action; if we have experienced the goodness of others, we ought to strive to make the hearts of our companions also happy.

3rd Sunday.—JUDGES xi. 29-40. Jeph-
c

thah's thank-offering was sincere, but how mistaken he was to think that the taking of a life could be an acceptable thank-offering to God!

4th Sunday.—1 SAM. i. 9-18 linked by the words 'And after a while Hannah had a son, and she called his name Samuel, meaning "heard of God,"' to the vv. 24-28. Hannah's offering was a very real one, for it must have been hard indeed to have given up her child.

5th Sunday.—PSALM cxlv. Song of thanksgiving.

The duty of a joyful spirit of thanksgiving is too often forgotten. As Aurora Leigh puts it,—'Some people always sigh in thanking God.' The readings of the month point to the duty of a grateful, courteous acknowledgment of kindly acts; to the showing of our gratitude by doing good in our turn, and they end with the joyful burst of thankfulness by the Hebrew Psalmist.

NOVEMBER.

Subject.—REPENTANCE.

'Tis not enough to say
We're sorry and repent;
And still go on from day to day
Just as we always went.

Repentance is to leave
The sins we've loved before,
And show that we in earnest grieve
By doing so no more.'

1st Sunday.—ISAIAH i. 10-17. The prophet Isaiah tells that true repentance is not shown by mere outward observances, but by 'ceasing to do evil.'

2nd Sunday.—LUKE iii. 2-14. John the Baptist, in his rousing speech, preaches the same lesson.

3rd Sunday.—JONAH iii.-iv. 4. The people of Nineveh repent at the preaching

of Jonah. But the sad thing here is that the preacher is actually sorry that the people do repent, because he had prophesied that they would be punished; and, as they were forgiven by God, he thought that he would be accounted a false prophet.

4th Sunday.—LUKE xv. 11-32 teaches the two lessons; one refers to the wrong-doer,—to return to the right path and confess his sin; and the other to the conduct of the bystander. The elder brother held aloof and showed no joy, and therefore richly deserved his father's rebuke. Reference may be made with advantage to the preceding verses, 3-10.

These readings insist on the necessity for proving our repentance by our actions—deeds, not words. Also that the love of proving ourselves right is a terrible snare, leading us to prefer that our companions should come to grief rather than we should be proved in the wrong. Assuredly Jonah was not akin to the angels in heaven who rejoice over the one sinner that repenteth! These two points are focussed, as it were, in the parable of the Prodigal Son.

DECEMBER.

Subject.—THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

'Sing forth his high, eternal name,
Who holds all powers in thrall,
Through endless ages still the same—
The mighty Lord of all.
His goodness, strong and measureless,
Upholds us lest we fall;
His hand is still outstretched to bless
The loving Lord of all.
Unwearied he is working still,
Unspent his blessings fall,
Almighty, loving, righteous One—
The only Lord of all.'

S. Longfellow.

1st Sunday.—LUKE iv. 16-32. May be called the beginning of the ministry of Jesus. Reading the words of the ancient prophet in the light of the following three years, how well the description of the ideal servant fits in with the life of the teacher. 'To preach the gospel to the poor'; what comfort to the poor,—whether poor in health, or strength, or goodness—must come in the thought that the spell of God—God's spell—is over all.

'I know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond His love and care.'

2nd Sunday.—MATT. v. 1-9; 21-24; 43-48. Some of the sayings of Jesus, collected and put together in the so-called Sermon on the Mount. The blessedness of those who seek to live rightly, and an exhortation to love our brethren, and to do good to all men.

3rd Sunday.—MATT. xiii. 31-34; 44-52. If the kingdom of heaven is within us, its influence will spread imperceptibly (mustard tree) and will lighten the heaviest burdens (leaven). It is therefore worthy to be sought for as the most precious of all possessions. Where is the kingdom of heaven? It may be said to be in the heart of all those who acknowledge the sovereignty of the Heavenly Father, who love him with all their soul, and obey him with all their understanding.

4th Sunday.—JOHN xvii. 17-26. Jesus

desires that his followers may all be one; 'Even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in us'—so shall the kingdom of God come upon earth as it is in heaven.

'And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith Thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.'

It constantly happens that, in the loving reverence which gathers around the memory of a great Leader, people come to confuse the teaching with the Teacher, and even slight his lessons while paying honour to his name. Thus has it been with Jesus. The whole story of his life breathes forth a loving dependence on his Heavenly Father; his lessons are simple, love to God and love to our fellowman,—repeated and reiterated in all kinds of poetic and practical ways. And yet to-day Christendom too often thrusts this teaching on one side, and the love for the Heavenly Father has been diverted and lavished on the Teacher. 'Why callest thou me good? There is none good save one, that is God?' we seem to hear him saying to-day; and we feel that we are not worthy to be called his disciples if we do not 'render unto God the things which be God's.' But because he taught, both by word and action, how life may be made worthy when we are at one with the Father; because we note the clear ring of trust and love when, in the darkest moment of his life, he prayed, 'Thy will be done,' we are glad to call him our Leader, and we would fain take his message into our hearts, a message bidding us love God as our Father, and to let that love bear fruit in loving service to our brother man.

'Spirit of Jesus, still speed on,
Speed on thy conquering way;
Till every heart the Father own,
And all his will obey.'

F. L. Hosmer.

Teachers in Council

Should Children remain with the same Teachers, or should they pass from Class to Class?

I.

To the Editor.

In the various London schools which I have lately had the pleasure of visiting, I note that there is one striking difference of method; namely, in some schools the children do not move up from class to class, as is the general custom, but remain under the same teacher from 'start to finish.'

This plan, certainly, has much to recommend it on the one hand, because it brings the teacher into more intimate relationship with his scholars, thus materially increasing his influence; but on the other, I can understand that such a plan may be attended with some practical difficulties, especially when the teachers are unequal in power and administration. It seems to me that if this subject could be ventilated in your columns, many of your readers would find the discussion both interesting and useful.

A MEMBER OF THE LONDON SUNDAY SCHOOL SOCIETY COMMITTEE.

II.

The question raised by a Member of the London Sunday School Society Committee as to whether it is better to promote children from class to class, or to retain them as far as possible under one teacher, is an exceedingly difficult one, for, as he pointed out, so much depends on the type of teacher available in a particular school. Much also depends upon what is attempted in the way of systematic and suitably graded instruction of a specific character. It is also clear that, especially in London where changes of residence are not unfrequent, the principle of a teacher retaining his or her class cannot be adopted in its entirety or rigidly adhered to. But in schools where most value is attached to sweetening the lives of the children by creating in them a deep affection for the teachings of Jesus, and their application to everyday life; and where love of God and love to man, and the discipleship of Jesus is the only creed, if such can be called a creed; the personal influence of the teacher is of such supreme importance that the six or seven years, likely to be available, is none too long to build up in the scholars an earnest and life-long desire to become God's agents for good in the world, and to

leave the world better than they found it. Until the age of nine the children are no doubt better dealt with in rather larger numbers in the Kindergarten, but after that age they should, I think, be suitably grouped as regards sex and character, and handed over, if possible, to a teacher who, having previously assisted in the school, or taught elsewhere, has come to stay; one who has taken up the work as a great privilege, and, therefore, with a determination to spare no effort to qualify in every way for so important a service. Given such teachers all difficulties disappear, and the arrangement becomes as advantageous for the teacher as for the pupil; for the teacher, becoming acquainted with the different characters of his children, soon wins his way into their affections and, loving the work, he will use every means to improve his opportunities. Teachers of this type will band themselves together for mutual help, and opportunities will arise for training teachers, such as do not otherwise occur.

One great difficulty, the loss of teachers and the waste of scholars from removals and other causes, can be overcome by drafting scholars into classes of a similar type, when occasion arises; and this can also be done should an individual scholar be found to be a disturbing element in a class; but the extreme reluctance of scholars to leave a teacher when the initial stages are passed, will, as a rule, be found to check any tendency to bad behaviour. It will also be found that

probably when a teacher is compelled to leave the school from any cause, a similar class has become somewhat reduced in numbers and the two classes can be amalgamated.

This method involves a study of teachers and classes, if not of individual scholars, by the superintendent; but with constant alertness on his part, and with the cordial co-operation of the teachers, the plan is by no means so difficult to carry out as would appear at first sight; while its advantages are manifest. The dignity of the work of the teacher is much increased, and there will be greater hope of the children growing up to become themselves teachers, and members of the Church of Christ.

F. TREMAINE.

III.

Shortly stated the proposition put forward by the last writer seems to be this: Children under nine on joining a school are taught in a Kindergarten. These for the purpose of this discussion we can ignore. On attaining nine they are arranged in classes according to sex and character, and each class is placed for the rest of the Sunday school life of its members under one teacher. The teacher, with the assistance of a systematic and suitably graded instruction of a specific character, conducts the class for say six or seven years. This arrangement has admitted advantages, and is by no means so difficult to carry out as would appear at first sight.

That being the proposition for dis-

cussion it would have been most satisfactory if the writer had stated that it had anywhere been tried and had been found to work successfully. Without the test of experience one is inclined to entirely doubt its practicability. If it has been found to work, what was the size of the school and of the classes? How many teachers were there taking the classes referred to, and how long has the system lasted?

The mere fact of the system being a new one is not an argument against it, of course. Many schools would gladly adopt any system which would make the work they do more really beneficial; but it is not easy to see what are the admitted advantages of the plan.

Under the old system a teacher can take charge of the class best suited to his or her capacity. It is just imaginable that where a teaching staff is paid it might be possible to get a body of teachers of something like the same learning and capacity for teaching. But in the Sunday school willingness to do one's best, rather than innate or acquired capacity for the work, is the practical mode of selection. Teachers must be *fitted* to their classes. There are teachers who are excellent for senior classes and yet are practically helpless with little ones; and others whose forte is the management and training of young children. Under the other systems teachers must be of practically the same capacity and have the same power of infusing noble thoughts.

Under the old system changes take place about every two years. The

teacher who has taken one set of children for, say a hundred Sundays, is benefited by having a fresh batch, and the scholar starts with a new character to be made, or marred, largely as the teacher has the knack or otherwise of influencing him. Under the new plan no change is contemplated. There must be the perpetual search for new ways of putting grand old thoughts. The fresh start is not possible.

The fact that scholars are accustomed at their daily school to the old system would make it difficult to get them to like the new one. To a certain extent, too, promotion from one class to another goes by merit. If there is no promotion one of the inducements to good behaviour and to the concomitant benefits is wanting. There is a real risk in the new plan of both scholars and teachers getting into a groove. Peculiarities in the mind of the pupil get overlooked through familiarity with them.

But the main difficulty is the practical one. It seems impossible with a system, voluntary to both teacher and scholar, to work on a method which is based on the assumption that both the teacher and the taught will be associated for six or seven years. Actual experience is against this, though there are happily a solid proportion of exceptions. Changes of teachers, and the ebb and flow of scholars seem to be inherent in Sunday school work. The advantage of the old system is its plasticity and adaptability; the new system implies rigidity. HOWARD YOUNG.

IV.

You ask me for a few lines on the subject of school management,—whether it is better to establish a series of graduated classes and pass children on from one to another in succession, or to let them remain always in the same class with the same teacher; and you refer to my own experience in following the latter method as likely to be of interest to others devoted to work among the young folk.

Well, my experience in the past would at once lead me, in the management of a Sunday school, to adopt the method of keeping the same scholars with the same teachers as long as it is in any way possible. I have found it work well, better indeed by far than the system of graduated classes with periodical promotions from class to class.

There are circumstances which render it impossible to carry out either plan entirely, but supposing that such limiting circumstances do not exist and we have free choice in the matter, the system of keeping the same children with the same teachers is to my mind better; chiefly, I think, because I regard the Sunday school class as a larger family. We have come to use the terms 'school,' 'scholar,' 'teacher,' but I do not think they are at all the best. The children's everyday *work* is school-work, carried out through the week, oftentimes excessive and with a worrying sense of impending examinations and visits by the inspector. What more desirable than that Sunday should,

even for the children, be a day of rest, that school work and lessons and the very words suggestive of these things should be avoided, and that they 'should seem to breathe a different air.' Now *classes* and set *subjects* with a *teacher* primed with a '*lesson*,' all tend to remind the *scholars* of their everyday *work*; and if the Sunday gathering of children and their friends can be made to have their due effect in mellowing the young workers and awakening their capacity to *think* about whatsoever things are good and beautiful, instead of learning items of information given in a set lesson, their innate reverence is far more likely to be awakened.

It may be objected that it is possible for a good teacher to so teach dryest facts as to make them interesting and captivating. Yes, and No. It is not so much the facts that the children learn as the good teacher's own personality. And there you have the whole matter in a few words. Given a good teacher, and the lesson or no lesson is immaterial—the material thing is that the good teacher's personality should have fullest opportunity to lead out the affections and reverence of the child. Well for the child if he or she be brought into contact with such a friend early, and retain the privilege of that developing friendship long. There is a theory that this method tends to become exhausting—that in fact the teacher gets played out. Yes, as a teacher, but never as an affectionate friend. You might be tempted, if this were so, to criticise

nature, and expect the mother of a family to become played out. She begins early in life with her 'class,' and when they are hale and strong, it may be middle-aged scholars doing their work in life, the dear mother, if she still lives, is dearer than ever, and however physically weak, is never so potent, morally and religiously, as then. Of course I am speaking of good mothers, just as of good teachers.

There are bad mothers and fathers, and indifferent ones, and the children of these bad or indifferent parents find their way into Sunday schools. What a blessing to such children to find that persistence of affectionate interest which home fails to provide, in the faithful school friend who, not for one quickly passing year only, but for a series of years, has himself or herself grown with the children's growth into a fuller knowledge of the divine possibilities of sustained friendship.

The fact that difficulties are to be met with in carrying out either method points to the need of care and judgment on the part of superintendent or school management committee in deciding on and adopting either or combining both methods so far as combination is possible. For my own part I believe that the better results are to be obtained by the persistent method, and I look back to the time when I adopted and carried it out at North Street and Capland Street with a quiet satisfaction that would lead me under like circumstances to adopt the method again.

THOMAS ROBINSON.

TRIFLES.

It was only a kind word spoken
To a weeping little child,
But the thread of its grief was broken,
And the little one sweetly smiled ;
And nobody stayed to notice
So tiny an act of love,
Save the angels keeping the record
In the wonderful book above.
And she who had spoken kindly
Went on her quiet way,
Nor dreamt such a simple action
Should count at the last great day.
But the pitying words of comfort
Were heard with a song of joy,
And the listening angels blessed her
From their beautiful home on high.

It was only a cup of water
With a gentle grace bestowed,
But it cheered a lonely traveller
Upon life's dusty road ;
For the way was long and dreary
And the resting places few,
And the sun had dried the streamlets,
And drank up the sparkling dew.
None noticed the cup of water
As a beautiful act of love,
Save the angels keeping the record
Away in that land above ;
But the record shall never perish,
And the trifling deed shall live,
For Heaven demands but little
From those who have least to give.

It isn't the world-praised wonders
That are best in our Father's sight,
Nor the wreaths of fading laurels
That garnish fame's dizzy height ;
But the pitying love and kindness,
The word of the warm caress,
The beautiful hope and patience
And self-forgetfulness ;
The trifle in secret given,
The prayer in the quiet night,
And the little unnoticed nothings,
Are good in our Father's sight.

The Whole Armour of God.

AN ALLEGORY.

THE fight had been hotly contested, and at sundown four knights sat in their tent, resting after the toils and dangers of the day, and taking needed refreshment. Their armour was laid aside and the dents and gashes in it bore evidence of the severity of the fray. They were all young men varying somewhat in age, from youth to past the time of early manhood. One sat somewhat apart from the other three, his helmet, carrying a white plume, by his side. He seemed to take no heed of his companions, but to be absorbed in a little book which he was attentively reading. His person bore no sign of any hurt received, although he was evidently severely fatigued. His companions had been less fortunate, and, as they staunched the blood and bound up their wounds as well as they could, they discussed the events and fortunes of the day.

‘Nay,’ said one, ‘tis well that I am here at all, for the seeming goodly helmet wherein I trusted is well nigh cleft in twain by a blow from a battle-axe, which only by good fortune stopped short of striking me dead.’ ‘And I,’ said the second, ‘received a thrust from a spear which pierced my breast-plate and gave me this wound.’ The third, a fairhaired youth with bright blue eyes, exclaimed, ‘I, too, am

sorely hurt, notwithstanding the brave armour that I bought me at the armoury of Giles Overlay, the armour seller, who——’ ‘What!’ broke in the other two, ‘Didst get thine armour there? We too paid him a heavy sum to provide us safely, but it seems the rascal lays on but the appearance of strength, making all bright and handsome to behold, but it fails under the blows of the enemy. Let us but get well of our wounds and the fellow shall meet his deserts at our hands.’

‘But,’ said the youngest knight of the fair hair in an undertone, ‘have ye noted how the Knight of the White Plume has suffered nothing in person? Now I know that he has not spared himself in the fight, for I saw his plume wave and his sword flash wherever the battle was hottest, and observed how the enemy dashed and broke against him as the waves of the sea upon a rock. Let us to him and learn whence he obtained the armour that has served him so well. It looks not so bright as ours; it is full of marks of goodly blows, but never a rent to be seen in it from top to toe.’

So they approached the silent knight, and the youngest said, ‘Sir Knight, pardon us that we break in upon thy meditations, but we observe that, notwithstanding thou hast withstood the hardest of this day’s fray, thou art without hurt, whilst we, who have also done our best as valiant knights, are full of wounds, and our armour is full of rents. We pray thee, of thy courtesy, to tell us whence thou hast the

armour that has protected thee; that we, too, may furnish ourselves with the like against days of battle to come.'

The Knight of the White Plume looked up. His face, though grave, was lighted by a kindly smile that spoke of a feeling and sympathetic disposition, and he seemed pleased to receive the question, and to be attracted by the youth and earnestness of the questioner. He returned his little book to his bosom, and in gentle tone which carried a tinge of recent sadness, replied, 'I will gladly answer your enquiry, and tell you how and whence I obtained my armour, if ye will bear patiently with me and not be wearied with my story, which must needs deal with many experiences.

'In my early days I enjoyed the happiness of being brought up by a brave father and tender mother. I was their only child, and nothing that they could do for my good seemed ever to be a trouble to them. My father was valiant in battle, and wise in counsel, and many a time with my mother I watched him leave for the fray, and joyed to see him return, wearied but unhurt. I would listen to his tales of warfare, and I longed for the time when I too should be deemed worthy to uphold the cause for which he fought. Now, as I grew older and more observant, I noticed how his armour, although indented and bruised, nevertheless showed no rent nor failure; and I sometimes talked to him about this, but could not at that age grasp the meaning of

the answer that he gave, although I noticed that he spoke of the source whence he obtained it as accounting for its excellence.

'Years passed by, and in their course my mother died. My father and I were then more than ever knit together in love and attachment, and, to my joy, the time was approaching when I might accompany him to the battlefield. But alas, before that day arrived, my father was stricken down with an illness which proved fatal. Whilst he lay on his deathbed I had much communing with him, and I pressed the question again upon him. "Father, tell me how and where I can obtain such goodly armour as yours. They tell me, to my sorrow, that thou must soon be called away. Our stature is alike, may I not wear thine own brave armour, and in it do such deeds as thou hast done?" "My son, thou canst not. Such armour as I wear cannot be passed from one to another. Each must acquire it for himself, and he who is not equal to the task and willing to endure the pain and cost of obtaining it can never receive it. When I am dead, go thou up into the highest watchtower and look towards the East. At first thou wilt see nothing. But look in faith, nothing doubting, and thine eyes will be opened, and thou shalt see a radiance and a glory in the heavens shining out in the far distance. It is the light that streams from the home of the great and good Armour Giver. Nay, my son, go not now to look, thine eyes

are dim with tears, and my time is short. Stay and hear my last injunctions. When I am gone and thou hast ceased thy mourning, go and look from the watchtower and so soon as thine eyes are opened to the full brilliancy of the light, thou mayest begin thy journey. Toilsome and painful it will be, but the light will be ever thy guide, if thou but keep thine eyes upon it. And here," added my father with failing voice, "is a little book full of goodly counsel. Keep it in thy bosom, read it often, and when in trial or difficulty thou wilt find in it comfort and guidance. Farewell, my son."

'With this my dear father passed away, and I was lost for a time in uncontrollable grief. At last I was able to look with calmness on the peaceful features of the dead, and as I did so my eyes fell on the goodly helmet with white plume set down by the bedside. Surely, I thought, my father must have been mistaken when he said that I could not use the armour borne by him. This helmet should serve me well. I will even try. I stretched out my hands to take it reverently up, but at the first touch, it crumbled in pieces! I fell on my knees. "Spirit of my Father!" I cried, "forgive me my mistrust of thy word! Henceforth thy injunctions shall guide me, and I will not depart from the course which thou hast placed before me."

'As soon as my father was laid in the grave and the days of mourning were accomplished, I prepared for my journey towards the bright and radiant

light. With bread in my wallet and a stout staff in my hand, I set out. Hard and rough was the way. Often I strayed in unknown paths, but a glance at the light brought me ever into the right direction again. After three days of painful wandering, I arrived weary and footsore at the city of the Armour Giver, and knocked at the gate. It was opened by a young man who led me through the streets of the city until I reached a large building wherein was seen the light of many great furnaces, and was heard the clang of the hammers of the smiths, as they welded and fashioned the various parts of a complete furnishing of armour.

'I was led into the Hall where there was a great and shining light, coming as it were from the further end, and I saw a man standing clad in complete armour. His face bore the marks of much suffering endured. There was no such comeliness about his person as I had seen in many a knight in my father's company, but his countenance was expressive of great love and gentleness of disposition. I bent my knee and said, "Sir Armour Giver, I pray thee to furnish me completely with such armour as was obtained by my dear father, now dead."

"Rise," he said, "thou shalt not bow the knee to me. I am not the Armour Giver, but only his son and helper. The Armour Giver thou canst not behold until thou shalt be purified through endurance. But follow me, and I will lead thee to where thou shalt find trial which, if truly endured,

may fit thee to receive some of my Father's gracious gifts."

"So he led me to the Castle of Endurance, where, he said, I must remain for a day and a night alone. The door, he said, would not be closed; I could escape if I would, but none who had so fled before endurance had ever received of his Father's armour.

"At first I thought this but a light trial, but as I sat in solitude I thought of many things in my past life which I then regarded as of little moment, but which now assumed a weight which it was hard to bear. But the thought of my father's words sustained me, and I bore with the solitude, until towards morning I fell into a sleep. When I awoke the Son and Helper was standing over me, looking anxiously into my face. "Thou hast struggled and overcome," he said, "and art meet to receive a portion of thy desires." So he led me into the hall, shod my feet with a firm and solid covering which he called "the preparation," bade me depart to my home and return when my desire for greater gifts should prompt me thereto. Thereupon I departed, and after much toil, although lightened and helped by the protection of my feet from injury afforded by "the preparation," I reached my home.

"Here I engaged in much peaceful work, in the arranging and settling of my father's affairs, and in going about amongst the poor and afflicted of our dependents, a work in which my feet, clad in the Armour Giver's "preparation," never tired. Gradually, however,

the desire to acquire more of the wondrous armour grew strong within me, and I set out again in the direction of the bright and shining light. The way was rough and miry as before, but the strong desire within me and the excellent protection of my feet caused me to think less than before of its dangers and roughnesses, and to go forward with a lightened and cheered heart. When the young man opened the city gate to me I thought he seemed pleased to see me, and as I stood in the great Hall of the shining light, the Son and Helper of the great Armour Giver extended his hand to me with the happy welcome, "Come, thou blessed of my Father."

"Again he led me to the Castle of Endurance, and told me I must watch and endure for two days and two nights if I would become worthy of further gifts. The trial was hard. As a young and active man I would rather have had some task assigned to me for distinct performance than to sit and meditate and examine my heart. At one time I had nearly failed, and the thought of escape began to possess me. I rose and moved towards the door. The moonlight streamed in at the narrow window with almost the brightness of day, my foot was nearly on the threshold, when something dropped from my bosom. It was the little book given me of my father. I stopped and picked it up. It had fallen open, and in the rays of the moonlight I read, "Put on the whole armour of God," and "No man having put his hand to

the plough and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God." With these words came to me also the recollection of my dear father's face and voice. My will was conquered and chastened, and I now knew no other desire than to patiently endure to the end of my appointed trial.

'When I entered the Hall of the Armour Giver, I heard the words, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation," pronounced by a voice which I had not previously heard; singularly sweet and gracious in tone, and it filled my heart with hope and confidence. There stood by the side of the Son and Helper a shining breastplate. "Take it," he said, "it is the 'breastplate of righteousness.' The gracious Armour Giver hath bestowed it upon thee. If thou shalt endure to the end he hath more gifts in store. Go back to thy daily labours and duties, and return when thy spirit shall so prompt thee." With this he girt my loins about with "truth," placed on my breast the shining breastplate, and bade me depart.

'With joy and peace in my heart, I commenced my homeward journey. Having my feet shod with the "preparation of the Gospel of peace," and my heart covered by the "breastplate of righteousness," the tedious way was soon traversed, nay, I could but sing for joy during the whole of my journey.

'Again I gave myself earnestly to peaceful work for the poor and needy of my people, striving all I could to spread around me truth and righteous-

ness, and continuing daily in the exercise of prayer and the study of the little book which I had aforetime but too much neglected. My heart was set, however, upon acquiring more of the gracious Armour Giver's riches of knightly equipment; and at last I felt that my will and desires were at one, and that I might with confidence present myself again at the Hall of the shining light.

'How little now was I troubled by the roughnesses, the mire, and the dangers of the way! I felt my soul uplifted and purified, and outward trials I little heeded. On arriving I was again received with signs of love, and was bidden to pass three days and three nights in the Castle of Endurance in contemplation, self-searching, and prayer. This had become to me a joy rather than a trial, by the thought of what a rich reward and abundant weight of glory would come of days of trial faithfully endured.

'When I entered the Hall of the shining light after the three days and nights, I heard again the gracious, loving voice saying, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." Methought the light shone with greater intensity. I knelt and bowed my head. The Son and Helper whispered to me the words "The pure in heart shall see God," and in my spiritual vision I saw, at last, the great Armour Giver himself, whose countenance beamed forth from the radiance with love and goodness, as the words proceeded from him, "Thou hast fought the good fight, henceforth

there is laid up for thee a crown of glory! Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

"Then the Son and Helper embraced me with inexpressible tenderness, placed on my arm "the shield of faith," on my head "the helmet of salvation," gave into my hand "the sword of the spirit;" and bade me, being thus equipped with "the whole armour of God," go forth into the world and fight only in the destruction of evil, and the setting up of truth and righteousness, praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit; and, having done all, to stand.

"So, my knightly comrades, ye know now whence I have the armour that has preserved me in so many fights. The gracious Armour Giver hath endless stores of it and will cast none out who truly seek him and pray for his gifts."

The three knights kept silence for a while. Presently the two elder began to speak, and one said to the other, "Methinks the trial and endurance too hard and irksome. I had rather trust in my own right arm. Let us to Giles Overlay, the armour seller, and tell him if he make us not a suit of armour that shall stand in battle better than that in which we have to-day suffered such wounds, he shall pay the penalty with his life."

The youngest knight, he of the flaxen hair and blue eyes, spake not, but remained absorbed in deep thought.

A few years after, chance brought

together again in battle the four knights. All went boldly into the fight. At eventide but two returned, and as they gazed at one another a light of recognition passed between them. They pointed to the East, where the radiant light met their entranced gaze, and clasping hands and gazing into each other's eyes, although they spake not, each heard the words in his heart—

'Put on the whole armour of God.'

[Teachers who use this allegory as a class lesson are recommended to engage the scholars in searching out in their Bibles the numerous scriptural passages to which allusion is made in it.]

F. W. TURNER.

'BECAUSE I hold it sinful to despond,
And will not let the bitterness of life
Blind me with burning tears, but look
beyond
Its tumult and its strife;

'Think you I find no bitterness at all,
No burden to be borne, like Christian's
pack?
Think you there are no ready tears to fall
Because I keep them back?

'Why should I hug life's ills with cold
reserve,
And curse myself and all who love me?
Nay!
A thousand times more good than I deserve
God gives me every day.

'Dark skies must clear, and when the clouds
are past,
One golden day redeems a weary year;
Patient I listen, sure that sweet at last
Will sound his voice of cheer.'

CELIA THAXTER.



AS the school visitor passes on his rounds, how many stray thoughts and suggestions clamour to be jotted down in his note book. Let us open our own and see if we can find any hints for our readers in it.

Here we are at the starting point,—I find the words ‘Follow my Leader,’ and remember that this has reference to a suggestion for the more orderly assembling of the children in their classes, and at their re-entrance for the closing service. It seems to me that it is better for us teachers to go before our scholars at these times,—leading them like a true shepherd,—rather than to send them on in front, which is somewhat suggestive of a city drover hurrying on his flock. Boys and girls easily catch the spirit of following their leader, and will take a real pleasure in trying to go as quietly, and step as lightly as he does; while the knowledge that their teacher considers himself equally bound to follow the laws of the school in the matter of quietness and order will take away all sense of hardship. It is a case of ‘*we* must go quietly,’ not ‘*you* mustn’t make a noise.’

‘Follow my leader’ is indeed the great watchword of the Sunday School. For whether we will or not, our children do follow our lead. Is the teacher lacking in regular attendance and in punctuality? It will not be long before the scholars will fail also. Is the teacher too indolent to prepare his lesson for the class? is he lukewarm over the whole business? If, so, he will very soon have cause to complain that the children do not pay attention, and that they *won’t* listen to what he says.

We must think it *worth while* to do our best, *worth while* to give ourselves without stint; then we shall find that ‘follow my leader’ holds good in this direction also. The school hour will pass happily, leaving behind, not only a pleasant memory, but some real gain to all concerned.

Nor does the question of dress escape this rule. Is this too trivial a matter to be mentioned? I think not. Boys, quite as much as girls, look to their teacher as one to be imitated, even down to the ‘wearing’ of a cigarette in the mouth the moment school is dis-

missed; and it is therefore right that our responsibility on this head should not be overlooked.

Yes, dress does play an important part in our influence in the school, and if we are inclined to doubt it, let us think how much *we* are influenced by the outward appearance of those around. Naturally, it is neatness, cleanliness, and fitness which are the three essentials for the dress of a Sunday School teacher; but I would like to plead for some measure of prettiness also. Of course the sense of fitness will preclude the dashing, fashionable attire (this is indeed rarely pretty), but we have no right to undervalue the pleasure—I was going to say, happiness—that children, and grown up folks, too, take in seeing people ‘look nice.’

I came across a curious illustration of this some time ago. Connected with an East End settlement was a Mothers’ Meeting which was presided over by various ladies, who kindly came each week from the West End for the purpose. These ladies used to wear dark, serviceable dresses, without ribbon or ornament of any kind, evidently feeling that the severely plain style was the most fitted for their work. One day the housekeeper of the Settlement happened to be standing among the ‘mothers’ and heard one say to her neighbour with a sneer, ‘I suppose *they* think anything is good enough to put on when they come to see us; they’ve got lots o’ pretty things at

’ome, I’ll be bound. They might let us have a chance o’ seeing them.’ These words are worth remembering, for they show how necessary it is to ‘look all round,’ a subject. Of course the ladies meant to do what was best, but they had ‘dressed down to their company,’ and it was a mistake. It was a case of

‘O wad some power the giftie gie us
To see ourselfs as others see us!
It wad frae monie a blunder free us,
And foolish notion.’

But to return to our school notes. The use of the roll-call seems to be falling into disfavour, and I am glad of it. It always has a depressing effect on me to hear the long list of names called out when frequently there are so many gaps between the ‘Here, sir.’ At one morning’s school a visitor told me that there was an attendance of only thirty-two; but one hundred names were called over. And, then, what a temptation for a mischievous laddie to put a comic intonation into his voice, for the benefit of creating a diversion among his schoolfellows. But that can be prevented perhaps. The other practical difficulty is worse, namely, the ease with which a child’s name may be passed over as absent, because it either speaks too softly or has failed to hear its name called out. It is surely preferable for the Superintendent or secretary to make the round of the classes, and quietly mark the attendances, leaving it to the various teachers to enter the early and good marks in their special class books.

The Inner Self.

SIX OUTLINE LESSONS FOR SENIOR CLASSES.

THE following outlines of actual lessons given to senior scholars, all above seventeen, may be useful to other teachers conducting similar classes. The text-book taken is the Rev. R. A. Armstrong's 'Man's Knowledge of God,' chapters I., II., III., VI., VIII.

Each member is furnished with writing materials, and, at the beginning of the lesson, heads his paper with the subject and the questions.

The chapter bearing on these is first explained and then read by some of the class. Questions are invited, and many illustrations introduced, so as to make the matter as clear as possible. It must be borne in mind that the answering of the questions, to be written down by young people not accustomed to putting their thoughts into writing, is an extremely difficult task, and it is therefore necessary to talk the points well over before the pens are taken up.

I have set down the subjects, the questions thereon, and also one of the *answers actually given in class*. And following these a few notes as suggestions and guidance to the teacher.

I. OURSELVES.

Inner Self and Outer Self.

1. What names do these go by?
2. Which is our real self, and why?

Class Answers.

1. By the inner self we mean the soul, or mind, by the outer self, the body. (H. D.)
2. The real self is the inner self, because it feels, thinks, and controls the movements of the outer self. (T. W.)

NOTES.—See first chapter of text-book.

Babyhood. The various senses; their uses and development; communicated by the various members of the body, but appreciated by the mind. Growth and continuous renewal of muscle, bone, and sinews, meaning an entire change of the outer self. The seen and the unseen. Movements of the body or visible self controlled by the unseen or inner self. The design and plan, and the building.

II. ONE WILL-POWER, GOD.

What evidences are there in our own surroundings leading us to believe in the existence of a Will-Power, and of one Will-Power only?

Class Answers.

If you wish to move a book from the table to the mantelpiece you move your hand to do it; before you move your hand you have to bring into action your mind. If a stone strikes you, you look at once for the person who threw it at you, knowing that a stone cannot move of its own accord. (T. W.)

If we think of the uniformity and order governing all movements, we can only come to one conclusion, that is, that there is one Supreme Being who governs all. (A. S. W.)

NOTES.—Chapter II., Text-book.

Movements of objects due to man's exertion of his will-power. Movement

in nature and the universe due to unseen will-power. The orbits through space of earth, sun, and stars are known. Sunrise and sunset. Growth, development, and all movements about us obey fixed laws. Are these due to many or one will-power? Compare the irregular attack of tribes of savages with the organised, regulated movements of disciplined troops under one leader. Order, harmony, uniformity, point to the presence and action of one will-power.

III. CONSCIENCE.

1. How does it affect us?
2. What does it help to prove?

Class Answers.

1. It makes us feel that it is right to do good, and that it is good to do right. (A. D.)
2. It helps to prove that, though we have a will-power of our own, there is a far greater one working within us, which most people call the voice of God, speaking and guiding the thought of man. (A. S. W.)

NOTES.—Chapter III., Text-book.

The four-fold appeal to our inward life. Exhortation to act worthily, warning to avoid what is unworthy, a feeling of regret at having acted unworthily, and of approval following a good deed. Illustrations. Incident in the child-life of Theodore Parker. Recognition of authority, and obligation to obey the dictates of conscience. A higher will-power than our own acting upon our inner self. The story of Hauff, 'The Stone Heart,' might be told to illustrate a life, dead to the

appeals of conscience, and therefore dead to sensations of joy, sorrow, and sympathy.

IV. JUDGMENT.

In matters of right and wrong how does judgment, together with conscience, act upon us?

Class Answer.

We can, by thinking, judge which is the right and which the wrong way, that is of course according to what we have been taught. Conscience urges us to take the right way. (F. W. G.)

NOTES.—End of Chapter III., Text-book.

Formation of judgment by experience, education, thought, and ancestral traditions. In various lands, and at various times in the history of man, the dictates of judgment will differ. Illustrations from the customs of savage tribes. The falsehood of the Spartan boy a virtue. The cruelties of the Inquisition. When our minds are made up as to which is the worthier of two paths to follow, then the authoritative voice of conscience bids us take it.

V. DOUBT AND DISBELIEF.

Can you tell why many disbelieve in the existence of God?

Class Answer.

When we are young we are taught one thing; when we get old enough to think for ourselves we come to different ideas to those taught us when young. By getting two or more ideas in our head, we do not know which to believe, and we may be made to disbelieve that there is a God. (E. W.)

It is interesting to compare the above answer with the following extract from an article in 'The Bible and the Child,' by the Very Rev. F. W. Farrar, D.D., F.R.S., Dean of Canterbury:

'This, at any rate, is certain: that if children are still taught to regard as articles of their religious belief opinions about the inerrancy, universal equal sacredness, verbal dictation, or supernatural infallibility of all that is contained between the cover of the sixty-six books which we call the Bible, the faith of those children, if they develop any intelligent capacity or openness of mind hereafter, is destined to undergo a rude and wholly needless shock, in which it will be fortunate if much of their religion does not go by the board.

NOTES.—Chapter VI., Text-book.

Early education often at fault. Impressions as to a God in the likeness of man, received when young, found afterwards to be untrue. Growth of disbelief in the authority of the Pope, of the Church, and in the infallibility of the Bible. Progress of science, and especially of geology, telling of the formation and history of the earth. The desire of thoughtful men to prove all things before believing. Indifference.

VI. THE PROPHETS.

1. What makes the prophet?
2. Can you name any?

Class Answers.

1. Good teachings which appeal to our inward thoughts and which live long after the teacher is dead. (A. S. W.)

2. Moses, Jesus, Mahomed, Charles Wesley, Bacon, Darwin, and many others.

NOTES.—Chapter VIII., Text-Book.

The power to help us to understand and believe what otherwise we might fail to do. Illustrations—Spectacles helping us to see; a companion by our side hearing better than we do, helping us to follow a speaker's address by giving us the main drift of it; an art teacher explaining the meaning and the beauty of a great master's picture to a class. The prophet's teachings should so appeal to our inner selves as to carry conviction of their truth.

ION PRITCHARD.

' BUT I have learn'd

That he who would unfold God's thought
in him—

And which alone is his success—must take
His counsel from within. If in thy heart
Springs early a desire to do one thing
Above all other things; if that has grown
And deepen'd with the years, while each
new stroke

Towards achievement fill'd thee with a joy
Which thou could'st tell was heavenly—do
that,

Though not a soul, as yet, applaud the deed.'

* * *

'He that stops

At any point, believing it the last,
Has not the thought exhausted, but himself.'

* * *

'O, trust thy best ideal, cherish still
The glory that the young heart burn'd to
reach:

It was not there for nothing: work and wait.'

ROBERT LEIGHTON.

D 2

Child Study.

1. The difficulty of understanding Children.

LONG before it was thought necessary to study the subject of childhood with a view to develop all its possibilities, it had been recognised as quite indispensable to study carefully the needs of lambs and puppies, of calves and colts. Now we are beginning to learn that a child is at least equally worthy of our serious attention, and that if we are to better the race, it is our bounden duty to try to understand the powers and limitations of childhood, so that we may train and develop it in the best possible way.

But how difficult it is to understand a child! At one time it was thought that an infant was a white page on which we could write just what we wished; now we know that it is more akin to a seed, of which there are innumerable species in the world, each possessing certain common requirements, but each also needing to be treated individually.

I certainly have heard persons say, 'Oh, I have no difficulty with children; I always know how to manage them'; but words of this kind usually imply that those who use them have not even laid hold of the fringe of the subject;

that they are, as yet, ignorant of the difficulty, and not that they have overcome it. Those who are really masters and mistresses in the art have none of this 'cocksuredom'; they are constantly considering and reconsidering the problem, and are ready to confess how often it baffles them; but, proceeding with slow and careful footsteps, they have pursued their onward way by the help of patience and sympathy, energy and love, until they gradually have come to enter into the life and spirit of the little ones.

Let us pause for a few minutes to think about this difficulty of understanding children.

Children are so fond of wearing masks; they live in a different world from ours; and they look on life from such a different standpoint. Where shall we find a clue for our guidance? Where is the 'Rosetta Stone' that will give us the key to the languages of the children? I think our Rosetta stone may be said to be the memory of our own childhood; not that we are to judge too exclusively from our own experience, for every child is differently constituted; still there are many characteristics which are common to all.

For instance, how curiously reticent we are as children! I remember when, at ten years old, I was in a boarding school, and sometimes a home parcel of goodies would be brought to me. In my secret heart I longed for two dainties; one was a pound pot of marmalade (it would cost ninepence, I knew, for I never passed a grocer's shop without looking at the, to me, tempting white pots) and the other was a quarter of a pound of sherbet. I had often treated myself to a ha'porth of this sweet nectar of the gods; but it was my ambition to have a whole quarter of a pound, so that I might be able to dispense hospitality for once in regal fashion. Now to my 'grown up' mind I do not find anything outrageous in these desires, and I know my people would have been delighted to have had the suggestion, because they naturally wanted to give me what I liked, if it was only reasonable; but I never breathed a word of my longings to anyone; it would have been too presumptuous!

We must recognize this want of 'speaking out,' as one of the necessary factors of our problem. We often hear of the openness of children, and, in a sense, it is perfectly true; they do speak out fearlessly in some things, but in others they scarcely let you get a glimpse of the world in which their child-soul lives and loves.¹ Let us do our best, then, to win their confidence, but do not let us be disheartened when

we find that the ivory gates which guard the land of little people will not always spring open to let us through.

This brings me to the next point; having acknowledged that they may have reasons of which we know nothing, let us be very careful always to place the best construction on a child's actions, even when he seems to us to have gone astray. A child's judgment is undeveloped, and he often means right when the result is wrong.

Those who have had the privilege of reading Mrs. Molesworth's delightful books for children (and I would add for parents and teachers, too) will remember many illustrations of this, illustrations of which we can probably find a parallel from our own experience. Let me give an extract from *Hoodie*. Hoodie was a little girl of five, loving-hearted, imaginative, but terribly afflicted by fits of naughtiness, which made her the black sheep of the family. She was passionately devoted to Cousin Magdalen; and one day, hearing that her favourite liked new-laid eggs, hit upon a secret plan for getting one for her, which should be "kite, kite fresh." Unfortunately her good intentions led to some trouble. The next day, in the early hours of the morning the house was disturbed by an extraordinary cry coming from the nursery, and mother thought that one of the children had the croup; there was a general commotion. Presently, the nurse brought in Hoodie, screaming, and explained that the child had brought in a bantam cock and had

¹ This is excellently shown in *The Golden Age*, a story of child-life, by Kenneth Graham.

secreted it under the bed, for "real mischievous naughtiness," as she said. The cousin was there, and "Hoodie," said Magdalen, "can't you leave off screaming and tell us about it."

"No," said Hoodie, stopping at once and with perfect ease, "I can't leave off screaming, and I won't. But I'll tell you, 'cos it was for you. I brought the little cock in to lay an egg for your breakfast, 'cos you said you likened zem kite fresh, and now Martin's spoilt it all. Of course it c'owed to tell me it was going to lay the egg, and now it won't. It's all spoilt, and I must sc'eam."

And then we get a glimpse of the right and the wrong way of dealing with a case of this kind. The wrong way, though unhappily the more frequent because the quicker, is to visit the offender with punishment on the ground that it was 'real mischievous naughtiness;' while the other, which the story goes on to give, was to patiently wait to find out the reason of the apparently foolish action, and then to strive to make the little one understand where it was that she was wrong. All children have a keen, though not always a correct idea of justice, and nothing is more fatal to one's influence over them than to allow them to feel that they have been misjudged.

In my own experience I can think of no circumstance which has brought such a sense of shame and humiliation to me as when events have proved that I have misjudged a little child through ignorance of its motives or some special

circumstances. I believe it is *righter* to believe that the child *meant* well, even when we have to blame its action; for here, perhaps, more than anywhere else, the old adage is true: 'If we knew all, we should forgive all.'

'Don't look at the flaws as you go through life :

And even when you find them
It is wise and kind to be somewhat blind,
And look for the virtue behind them.
For the cloudiest night has a hint of light
Somewhere in its shadows hiding ;
It is better by far to hunt for a star
Than the spots on the sun abiding.

—ELLA W. WILCOX.

"I AGREE with Helvetius, the child should be educated from its birth; but how?—there is the rub: send him to school forthwith? Certainly; he is at school already with the two great principles, Nature and Love. Observe, that childhood and genius have the same master-organ in common—inquisitiveness. Let childhood have its way, and as it began where genius begins, it may find what genius finds. A certain Greek writer tells us of some man, who, in order to save his bees a troublesome flight to Hymettus, cut their wings, and placed before them the finest flowers he could select. The poor bees made no honey. Now, sir, if I were to teach my boy, I should be cutting his wings and giving him the flowers he should find himself. Let us leave Nature alone for the present, and Nature's loving proxy, the watchful mother."

'Therewith my father pointed to his heir sprawling on the grass, and plucking daisies on the lawn; while the young mother's voice rose merrily, laughing at the child's glee.'

LYTTON.—'The Caxtons.'

Mend Bad Actions with Good Ones.

THE BROKEN FLOWER POT.

From *The Caxtons*, by Bulwer Lytton.



AS I grew older, I became more sensibly aware that a father's eye was upon me: I distinctly remember one incident, that seems to me, in looking back, a crisis in my infant life, as the first tangible link between my own heart and that calm, great soul.

My father was seated on the lawn before the house, his straw hat over his eyes (it was summer), and his book on his lap. Suddenly a beautiful delf blue and white flower-pot, which had been set on the window-sill of an upper storey, fell to the ground with a crash, and the fragments spluttered up round my father's legs. Sublime in his studies as Archimedes in the siege, he continued to read; '*Impavidum ferient ruine!*'

'Dear, dear!' cried my mother, who was at work in the porch; 'my poor flower-pot that I prized so much! Who could have done this? Primmins, Primmins!'

Mrs. Primmins popped her head out of the fatal window, nodded to the summons, and came down in a trice, pale and breathless.

'Oh,' said my mother, mournfully, 'I would rather have lost all the plants in the greenhouse in the great blight last May,—I would rather the best

tea-set were broken! The poor geranium I reared myself, and the dear, dear flower-pot which Mr. Caxton bought for me my last birthday! That naughty child must have done this!'

Mrs. Primmins was dreadfully afraid of my father—why, I know not, except that very talkative, social persons are usually afraid of very silent, shy ones. She cast a hasty glance at her master, who was beginning to evince signs of attention, and cried promptly, 'No, ma'am, it was not the dear boy, bless his flesh, it was I!'

'You! how could you be so careless? and you knew how I prized them both. Oh, Primmins!'

Primmins began to sob.

'Don't tell fibs, nurse,' said a small shrill voice; and Master Sisty (coming out of the house as bold as brass) continued rapidly—'Don't scold Primmins, mamma: it was I who pushed out the flower-pot.'

'Hush!' said nurse, more frightened than ever, and looking aghast towards my father, who had very deliberately taken off his hat, and was regarding the scene with serious eyes wide awake.

'Hush! And if he did break it, ma'am, it was quite an accident; he was standing so, and he never meant it. Did you, Master Sisty? Speak!'

(this in a whisper) 'or pa will be so angry.'

'Well,' said my mother, 'I suppose it was an accident; take care in future, my child. You are sorry, I see, to have grieved me. There's a kiss; don't fret.'

'No, mamma, you must not kiss me;

I don't deserve it. I pushed out the flower-pot on purpose.'

'Ha! and why?' said my father, walking up.

Mrs. Primmings trembled like a leaf.

'For fun!' said I, hanging my head—'just to see how you'd look, papa; and that's the truth of it. Now beat me, do beat me!'

My father threw his book fifty yards off, stooped down, and caught me to his breast. 'Boy,' he said, 'you have done wrong: you shall repair it by remembering all your life that your father blessed God for giving him a son who spoke truth in spite of fear! Oh, Mrs. Primmings, the next fable of this kind you try to teach him, and we part for ever!'

From that time I first date the hour when I felt that I loved my father, and knew that he loved me; from that time too, he began to *converse* with me. He would no longer, if he met me in the garden, pass by with a smile and nod; he would stop, put his book in his pocket, and though his talk was often above my comprehension, still somehow I felt happier and better, and less of an infant, when I thought over it, and tried to puzzle out the meaning; for he had a way of suggesting, not teaching—putting things into my head, and then leaving them to work out their own problems. I remember a special instance with respect to that same flower-pot and geranium. Mr. Squills, who was a bachelor, and well to do in the world, often made me little

presents. Not long after the event I have narrated, he gave me one far exceeding in value those usually bestowed on children,—it was a beautiful large domino-box in cut ivory, painted and gilt. This domino-box was my delight. I was never weary of playing at dominoes with Mrs. Primmings, and I slept with the box under my pillow.

'Ah!' said my father one day when he found me ranging the ivory parallelograms in the parlour,—'ah! you like that better than all your playthings, eh?'

'Oh yes, papa.'

'You would be very sorry if your mamma was to throw that box out of the window, and break it for fun.' I looked beseechingly at my father, and made no answer.

'But perhaps you would be very glad,' he resumed, 'if suddenly one of those good fairies you read of could change the domino-box into a beautiful geranium in a beautiful blue and white flower-pot, and that you could have the pleasure of putting it on your mamma's window-sill.'

'Indeed I would!' said I, half-crying.

'My dear boy, I believe you; but good wishes don't mend bad actions—good actions mend bad actions.'

So saying, he shut the door and went out. I cannot tell you how puzzled I was to make out what my father meant by his aphorism. But I know that I played at dominoes no more that day. The next morning my father found me seated by myself under a tree in the garden; he paused

and looked at me with his grave, bright eyes very steadily.

'My boy,' said he, 'I am going to walk to —' (a town about two miles off), 'will you come? and, by the by, fetch your domino-box: I should like to show it to a person there.' I ran in for the box, and, not a little proud of walking with my father upon the high-road, we set out.

'Papa,' said I by the way, 'there are no fairies now.'

'What then, my child?'

'Why—how then can my domino-box be changed into a geranium and a blue and white flower-pot?'

'My dear,' said my father, leaning his hand on my shoulder, 'everybody who is in earnest to be good, carries two fairies about with him—one here,' and he touched my heart; 'and one here,' and he touched my forehead.

'I don't understand, papa.'

'I can wait till you do, Pisistratus! What a name!'

My father stopped at a nursery gardener's, and, after looking over the flowers, paused before a large double geranium. 'Ah, this is finer than that which your mamma was so fond of. What is the cost, sir?'

'Only 7s. 6d.,' said the gardener.

'My father buttoned up his pocket. 'I can't afford it to-day,' said he gently, and we walked out.

On entering the town, we stopped again at a china warehouse. 'Have you a flower-pot like that I bought some months ago? Ah, here is one, marked 3s. 6d. Yes, that is the price.

Well, when your mamma's birthday comes again, we must buy her another. That is some months to wait. And we can wait, Master Sisty. For truth, that blooms all the year round, is better than a poor geranium; and a word that is never broken is better than a piece of delf.'

My head, which had drooped before, rose again; but the rush of joy at my heart almost stifled me.

'I have called to pay your little bill,' said my father, entering the shop of one of those fancy stationers common in country towns, and who sell all kinds of pretty toys and nick-nacks. 'And by the way,' he added, as the smiling shopman looked over his books for the entry, 'I think my little boy here can show you a much handsomer specimen of French workmanship than that work-box which you enticed Mrs. Caxton into raffling for last winter. Show your domino-box, my dear.'

I produced my treasure, and the shopman was liberal in his commendations. 'It is always well, my boy, to know what a thing is worth, in case one wishes to part with it. If my young gentleman gets tired of his plaything, what will you give him for it?'

'Why, sir,' said the shopman, 'I fear we could not afford to give more than eighteen shillings for it, unless the young gentleman took some of these pretty things in exchange.'

'Eighteen shillings!' said my father; 'you would give *that*. Well, my boy, whenever you do grow tired of your box, you have my leave to sell it.'

My father paid his bill, and went out. I lingered behind a few moments, and joined him at the end of the street.

'Papa, papa!' I cried, clapping my hands, 'we can buy the geranium—we can buy the flower-pot.' And I pulled a handful of silver from my pockets.

'Did I not say right?' said my father, passing his handkerchief over his eyes. 'You have found the two fairies!'

Oh, how proud, how overjoyed I was, when, after placing vase and flower on the window-sill, I plucked my mother by the gown, and made her follow me to the spot.

'It is his doing, and his money,' said my father; 'good actions have mended the bad.'

'What!' cried my mother when she had learned all; 'and your poor domino-box that you were so fond of! We will go back to-morrow, and buy it back if it costs us double.'

'Shall we buy it back, Pisistratus?' asked my father.

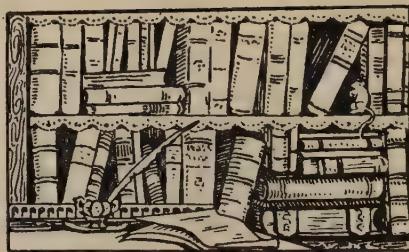
'Oh no—no—no! It would spoil all,' I cried, burying my face on my father's breast.

'My wife,' said my father solemnly, 'this is my first lesson to our child—the sanctity and the happiness of self-sacrifice—undo not what it should teach to his dying day!'

And that is the history of the broken flower-pot.

'No action, whether foul or fair,
Is ever done, but it leaves somewhere
A record.'

LONGFELLOW.



The Editor's Bookshelf.

WE are often asked for books which will be helpful for teachers who want to give their scholars some idea of the religious faith they profess.

One of the best published is *Man's Knowledge of God*,¹ by Rev. R. A. Armstrong (price 1s.). The book is intended to show the reasonableness of a belief in God, and the evidences of His presence, as seen within and around us. On page 33 will be found a series of lesson notes on 'The Inner Self,' taken from some of its chapters; these are good both for the lessons themselves, and also for the suggestiveness of the kind of use which other teachers may obtain from the book.

For young children Mr. Armstrong's *Outline Lessons in Religion* (price 6d.) will be most acceptable. Proceeding by degrees from a stone, an acorn, a dog, the writer comes to a child, and its capacities for higher development,

¹ All books mentioned in *The Helper* may be bought on application to Mr. Hare, Sunday School Association, Essex Hall, Essex Street, Strand, W.C.

and hence to a conception of a Divine Father of all.

Little Asker, or Learning to Think, by Rev. J. J. Wright (price 1s. net.) treats of the development of the spiritual life of the child in story form, and is deservedly popular with many parents, teachers, and children.

God and the Soul, again by Rev. R. A. Armstrong (price 3s. 6d. net.) may be taken as a second volume to his *Man's Knowledge of God*, and will be found to be an equally valuable assistant to an earnest, thoughtful teacher. It deals with the subject of God, as revealed as Power, as Righteousness, and as Love. Then comes a chapter on the problem of Evil, on the spirit of the various forms of religious teaching, and concludes with the author's answer to the question, What is the Bible?

The British and Foreign Unitarian Association have also published a large number of leaflets which ought to be most useful to our senior classes. Perhaps no better plan could be adopted than for a teacher to get copies of one or other of the following leaflets; and having read it through carefully, talk over its contents with the minister, in order to get any necessary illustration and amplification. Then let him take up the subject with his class, not hurrying through it, but giving time for mental digestion; and when the set of lessons upon the leaflet is completed, let each member of the class take home a copy. President Garfield used to say that

when he was a professor, and felt there was some point which he wanted to work up, he used to give out notice that he would lecture upon the theme, and thus forced himself to study the subject systematically. Many of our teachers, if they took up the question of their religious faith in this way, would find themselves much more able afterwards to give a reason for 'the hope that is in them' than many can do at the present day; and we are sure that our ministers would be most ready to help them with the special knowledge they possess. These 'Unitarian Leaflets' may be bought in two bound volumes, price 1s., and it would be well for the teacher to get a copy of these and make his own selection. Those most useful for classes are, perhaps, the following:

Unitarian Christianity Explained, by R. A. Armstrong. ($\frac{1}{2}$ d.)

Unitarian Affirmations, by W. Copeland Bowie. ($\frac{1}{2}$ d.)

Think for Yourself, by Brooke Herford. ($\frac{1}{2}$ d.)

Search the Scriptures, by W. Copeland Bowie. (1d.)

These leaflets give the opinion of their various authors on the subject of their religious faith; but it must ever be remembered that we have no creed, and so no one has the right to speak with authority on what *we believe*, as a body, for to do so would be to deny the right of private judgment. Our beliefs must needs develop as the light of truth shines more brightly; still it remains true that in

a general way there is some consensus of opinion; and this it is that, we believe, is fairly represented in the books and leaflets referred to above.

To many people the terms Religious teaching and Bible teaching are synonymous, but when we realise that the Bible is the library of the Hebrews, and that the books contained in it vary as much as do the books in our collections of English classics, we shall understand that the words do not necessarily mean the same thing. We shall find plenty of religious teaching in the Bible, it is true; and plenty outside also, for those who have the eyes to see and the ears to hear. But, endeared by the ties of old association, and made sacred to our hearts by the long generations of past heroes and teachers who have loved the pages of Holy Writ, as well as because of the gems of beautiful thought and aspiration which are to be found therein, it is right and good that the Bible's true place should be made clear, and its real value maintained.

The Bible and the Child, a small pamphlet by Dr. James Martineau (price 1d.) contains a wise and timely protest against the popular method of treating the Bible as if its every word was infallible, and therefore to be put before our children without careful selection of passages. This protest is especially noteworthy, coming as it does from one whose reverence for the true religious spirit is universally acknowledged.

How to read the Bible, by Professor

Adeney (price 1/6), will be of great service to the would-be student of the Bible, and could well be used in a senior class, as also *The Three Stages of a Bible's Life*, by W. A. Gannett (price 4d.), and *Lessons on the Title-page of an English Bible*, by F. E. Millson (price 8d.).

A short account of the *Books of the Bible*, by J. H. Weatherall, will be published by the Sunday School Association very shortly, in two volumes, Old Testament and New Testament. A set of lessons based on these volumes will enable our senior boys and girls to know something of the contents of the Bible, a knowledge in which they are at present greatly lacking.

The Bible for Young People, translated by P. H. Wicksteed from the Dutch work by Dr. Oort and Dr. Hooykaas, 6 volumes (price 21/- net.) give the results of critical study of the Old and New Testament in a reverent, clear manner. Its price precludes it from the ordinary Sunday school teacher's own bookshelf, but there should be a copy in the Teachers' Library, so that it may be borrowed for home reading by those who are preparing lessons from any special part of Bible history.

Life in Palestine when Jesus lived, by Professor J. Estlin Carpenter (price 1/-), is probably the best known and most generally used of the series of Biblical Manuals, brought out by the Sunday School Association; and no teacher should fail to read, mark,

learn, and inwardly digest it. But the others of the series are also excellent for cultured young people; and in any course of lessons on Job, Jeremiah, the prophets of the Captivity, the Gospels, or the Epistles, these manuals should be at hand for reference and study.

Coming now to books for Bible teaching of a more simple character, and, therefore, which will be hailed with delight by a large majority of our schools, the new publication of the Sunday School Association,

Half-hours with the Parables, by J. Crowther Hirst (price 1/-), stands in the foremost rank. Thirteen of the parables of Jesus are given (from the revised translation) prefaced by a text and poetical extracts, and followed by comments, a poem, and an illustrative story. Teachers using this 'Helper' intelligently will find the half-hours pass quickly and profitably.

In *The Book of Beginnings*, by 'Aunt Amy,' we have the stories of Genesis told, as nearly as possible, in the words of the Bible. And this is as it should be, for truly nothing more simple and beautiful is to be found in our English literature than the language in which these old-world stories are written. The print is large, so that the children can read it easily; and explanations and notes are added for the teacher's especial use.

The Story of Jesus, by the Misses Gregg (price 1/6), contains the story of the life of Jesus told in simple, interesting style. This book is already

greatly prized by many children, and those who do not know the work will do well to see it.

The last book to which we shall refer in this article is to *The Childhood of Jesus*, by W. A. Gannett (price 1/6), a charming companion to anyone taking up the Gospels as a subject for study. It is divided into four parts, and deals in turn with (1) the land where Jesus lived and the people among whom he dwelt; (2) his home; (3) in Nazareth; (4) in Jerusalem, and after. The author's simple and interesting style, and the love he so evidently has for the hero of his story, makes the book most pleasant as well as profitable reading.

'It were a task of sadness to take up the infant life, as if it were the fallen petals of a celestial flower, borne to our feet by the stream of things and every moment fading more; but it is a task of gladness to accept it as the seed and germ of an everlasting growth, which, planted in the rock and strengthened by the storms of earth, shall bloom at length in the eternal fields.

'To educate a child is an office of which no one, taking the Christian view, can think lightly. To administer perceptions, and unfold the faculties in their season and proportion; to give power to the affections, without impairing their symmetry; to develop in their right order, and to their full intensity, the great ideas of duty and of God; to exhibit human virtues and relations in so beautiful an aspect, that the soul may pass from them with ease to the venerated love of the Infinite Mind; is a task of responsibility so solemn, as to invest every parent's life with the sanctity of a divine mission.'

JAMES MARTINEAU.

Moses and Zoroaster.



HAVE called these papers by the names of two great prophets of old time. We know little about them, for the books which tell us of them were not fully written for many hundred years after they lived. It has even been possible to doubt whether such heroic teachers ever lived at all. But these names serve to remind us of one important fact, viz., the value of those high influences in religion which come to us with the impress of powerful individual minds. All great thoughts, all noble ideas, all worthy endeavours, rise first of all in some single soul. But sometimes they reach us out of the dim and distant past only like beautiful voices. For instance, we cannot really tell who wrote the poems which have been sung by so many generations of devout worshippers, the Hebrew Psalms. We can join in their praises and their prayers, but we often feel that we should like to know what manner of men they were whose fervent trust and joyous gladness thus found imperishable utterance. In the case of the great religions which we call Buddhism and Christianity, the stories which we have of their founders, of the way in which they taught and laboured for the good of men, may not be all true, but they help us to understand their spirit; by reading them we enter into sympathy with those who were near to them, and feel not only the power of

their thoughts, but also the impression of their character, and the force of the impulses which they imparted.

Moses and Zoroaster, then, stand for the religions of ancient Israel and ancient Persia. These two religions had very different origins. They sprang up in different parts of Asia; they belonged to different races; the historical courses through which they ran were by no means the same. But they had certain deep resemblances. Both expressed themselves at last in codes of sacred law, in hymns and prayers. Both laid great stress on the importance of practical morality. Both worked out into great detail ideas of personal and ceremonial purity. And both cherished lofty thoughts of God, of his creative work in the world, and his good purpose for his people on earth. So it happened that when the thinkers of Israel were first brought into contact with the teachers of Iran, they found themselves in the presence of principles not unlike their own; and it was possible for the notions and beliefs of one nation to act on the notions and beliefs of the other.

The people of Israel were singularly open to such influences at various stages of their long career. The oldest form of their religion resembled in some important respects the religion of the wild Arab tribes of the desert. When they settled in Canaan, they adopted many of the practices of the small Canaanite kingdoms, which possessed a more advanced civilisation than their own. Perhaps in this early

stage, perhaps a good deal later, they became acquainted with some of the curious old stories, such as those of the Garden of Eden or the Flood, which they afterwards worked into their own traditions, but which really had their origin in the antique lore of the peoples of the Tigris and the Euphrates in Mesopotamia. When they were carried into exile they came back with the names of the months which they had learned in Babylonia. Then followed the supremacy of Persia, from the days of Cyrus, till a new Greek power appeared upon the scene, and Alexander the Great opened the kingdoms of the East to the arms, the art, and the philosophy of the West (332 B.C.). Amid these vicissitudes, along what lines may we look for traces of Persian thought in the later religion of Israel? It is interesting to find that they present themselves in that group of beliefs which gather round the great idea known in the Gospels as 'the kingdom of God.'

I.

When Moses led the tribes of Israel out of Egypt, he did so as the servant of the God whom he taught his countrymen to call by the name Yahwé. One of the special characteristics of this God, destined to be of supreme importance as time went on, was his righteousness. This made itself manifest in various ways. On behalf of the people against their enemies it came to mean little more, sometimes, than the

prowess and might by which their God secured for them the victory in battle. In the oldest of the great national poems, commemorating the rising of the oppressed tribes of middle and northern Israel against the Canaanites, there is an obscure passage (*Judges* v. 11) which seems to describe the people at the village-wells as rehearsing 'the righteous acts of Yahwé,' telling over again tales of former conquests.

But there was another side to this, displayed in the administration of justice at the sanctuary. Cases which could not be settled by the ordinary judges, the 'elders' of the chief families in clan and tribe, were carried, during the Wanderings, to Moses at the sacred tent, and he decided them in the name of Yahwé. In after days this practice was continued. Matters of difficulty, important suits, investigations into theft, and the like, were referred to the nearest holy place, and the priest in charge settled it in accordance with customs and usages now no longer traceable, though out of them came the beginnings of Law. This was called going 'to God.' The important element in it was that it connected the idea of justice with the idea of religion. Men learned to feel that the God who gave his people liberty, demanded from them obedience to principles of morals and social order.

To the prophets of later time this higher view of the character of the God of Israel became especially dear. They were never weary of applying it to the social conditions, the religious practices,

the political prospects, of their nation. Their preaching has only one central theme, righteousness. To make this prevail among all classes, from the king and his princes to the poorest slave, was their great aim. It must be the guide of priest and judge, the rule of buyer and seller; the father must teach it to his children; the wise must share the knowledge of it with the ignorant.

But this conception allied itself with another. Many of the ancient peoples of the same race as the Israelites were fond of talking of their God as king. We do not know whether Moses ever used this title. Perhaps it was not employed in Israel till after the monarchy had been firmly established by David. But it became a familiar thought in later days that Yahwé was king. When Isaiah gazed into the palace-temple of heaven, and beheld Yahwé enthroned amid the seraphim who sang his praise, he feared that he was undone; 'mine eyes,' he cried, 'have seen the king!'

Now an Eastern sovereign not only reigned, but governed. And it was matter of the utmost consequence that he should govern justly. The ideal prince would 'judge the poor with righteousness, and reprove with equity for the meek of the land.' Now when the idea of kingship was attached to the faith in Yahwé, it found the belief in his righteousness already established. So the two thoughts helped each other. As the king of Israel, his rule would be just: but this justice was already

known and loved, and so his sovereignty was the more highly exalted.

And what could there be beyond his sway? In old time they had imagined that the God of Israel might fight against the God of Ammon or the God of Moab. The limits of their power were marked by the territory which they respectively won for their own people. But when the prophets learned that God was one, they saw that the destinies of other nations must be under his control as much as those of Israel. Then the sovereignty of God came to be extended from the borders of Israel to include the whole earth. But even that vast dominion did not exhaust its scope. For above the earth was the unknown region of the skies, full of powers which owned allegiance to the Most High who reigned above them all. These also were bound to fulfil his purposes, and obey his will. They were the officers of his heavenly state, the servants of his everlasting beneficence, the ministers of his glory, for ever hymning his majesty, and working out his great decrees.

So when great events happened to Israel, the poets cried 'Yahwé is king,' and burst out into psalms of praise. Especially was this the case when the captives were set free, and the prophet of Babylon saw from afar the messenger of the good news speeding over the mountains of the ancestral land, and heard his joyous shout to Zion, 'Thy God reigneth' (*Isaiah* lii. 8). Well might they cry in days yet later still (*Ps.* cxlv. 9-13),

‘Yahwé is good to all;
 And his tender mercies are over all his
 works.
 All thy works shall give thanks unto
 thee, O Yahwé;
 And thy saints shall bless thee.
 They shall speak of the glory of thy
 kingdom,
 And talk of thy power;
 To make known unto the sons of men
 his mighty acts,
 And the glory of the majesty of his
 kingdom.
 Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,
 And thy dominion *endureth* throughout
 all generations.’

II.

When the singers of Israel saw in the fall of Babylon and the restoration of Jerusalem the proof of the sovereignty of their God Yahwé, the Persian conquerors interpreted the events which gave them their magnificent empire as the expression of the creative rule of their God Ormazd. While the Jews were rebuilding their temple on the sacred hill, Darius (521-486 B.C.) proudly enumerated the countries which owned his sway from the Indus to the Mediterranean, and piously ascribed his vast dominions to the gift of Ormazd. Here is a translation of an inscription on his great palace at Persepolis:—

‘The great Ormazd, who is the greatest of gods, has installed Darius as king; he has given to him the royalty. By the grace of Ormazd, Darius is king.’

‘Darius the king says: May Ormazd bring help to me, with all the gods. And may Ormazd protect this land from devastation, from scarcity, from lie. May the Other not invade this country, nor devastation, nor scarcity, nor lie.

‘This is the prayer which I address to Ormazd with all gods. This may Ormazd grant to me with all gods.’

Who was Ormazd, and who was ‘the Other’? And why should we care about them?

The inscriptions of Darius and his successors tell us more about Ormazd. They call him the Creator of the heavens and the earth; and they say that he has bestowed ‘the Good Principle’ on man, and given him a law by which he may walk in the right path. Do we know anything more about this law? These ancient rock-cut words—so much older in actual record than any remains of the religion of the Old Testament—suggest that the kings of Persia looked to Ormazd just as the Jews looked to Yahwé for help and strength; they believed that the way of welfare lay in doing his law, just as the authors of Psalm and Proverb taught that wisdom and prosperity would follow obedience to the law of Yahwé. Ormazd, then, it is plain, was God to the Persians. If he made the world, and gave to man that power of right thinking or judgment which we call ‘conscience,’ then he was supreme in might and in righteousness. But if so, who was ‘the Other’? ‘The Other,’ it would seem, was in some way the author of war, and famine, and falsehood. All cruelty and suffering, all want and disease, all treachery and fraud, were his wicked work. And men prayed to Ormazd, the lord of earth and sky, who loved goodness, to protect them from that agent of evil whom they dared

not name, that veiled figure of darkness—'the Other.'

But we can find out a good deal more concerning the God Ormazd from the ancient writings which the descendants of the Persians collected at a time much later than the inscriptions of Darius. These writings have been for many generations in the keeping of the Parsis of India, who were driven out of Persia because of their religion early in the last century. They are now known by the name of the *Zend Avesta*. They consist of sacred laws and hymns and prayers. They tell of sacrifice, and penance, and purification. They are only the remains of a much larger literature; and their present form is due to unknown editors who saved what they could from the havoc of conquest, and gathered all the fragments into one collection,—much as if chapters from the *Levitical Code*, and passages from the sermons of the *Prophets*, and parts of *Psalms*, had all been mixed up together. The oldest portions can be to some extent distinguished by peculiarities of language, just as an English scholar could at once tell a bit of *Piers Plowman* or *Chaucer* belonging to the fourteenth century though commingled with extracts from *Shakespeare* and *Hooker* and *Spenser* in the sixteenth. These portions form five great hymns, called *Gāthās*, and contain much of the most beautiful and important doctrine. Like other parts of these *Scriptures*, they are ascribed by tradition to the great teacher whose name is often spelt *Zoroaster*, or (more correctly) *Zara-*

thustra. *Zoroaster* was the form known to the Greeks, who were very greatly interested in what they heard about him. When *Plato* and *Aristotle* wrote, in the fourth century B.C., the Greek travellers were acquainted with the conception of the good and evil powers, and the conflict which was being waged between them. And they supposed *Zoroaster* to have lived thousands of years before, which at least implies that the teaching attributed to him was believed to be of very great antiquity. What was this teaching?

Far away in the highlands which stretched eastwards towards the *Hindu Kûsh*, and ran up in the north-west towards the mountains of *Armenia*, the ancestors of the *Medes* and *Persians*, on the one hand, and of the *Hindus* of *India* on the other, had a common home. How and when they parted, by what migrations they passed from land to land, we do not know. But they retained many common thoughts about the world of gods and men, and even some sacred names and consecrated usages. Some of the tribes crossed the mountains, and descended into the plains of the *Indus*. Others remained in the north, and gradually pushed their way further and further west. Among these, at some date which cannot be determined, long before the days of *Darius*, arose the great prophet-priest, *Zarathustra*.¹ The later books tell wondrous tales of his birth, his temp-

¹ The historical character of *Zarathustra* has not been unchallenged, any more than that of *Moses*. But the most cautious scholars seem agreed in regarding him as a real person,

tation, the perils and dangers which beset him. With these legends we have nothing to do. He seems to have been married, and to have had sons: and he acquired such influence by his teaching that the sacred law which afterwards (like that ascribed to Moses) bore his name, was supposed to have been communicated to him by God himself.

In these books God is designated by the name Ahura Mazda, 'Lord all-knowing,' which was afterwards shortened into Aura-Mazda, or Ormazd. He was all knowledge and wisdom, the all-seeing; he was the perfection of holiness, the healer, the unconquerable protector and preserver. He was not connected with any special objects of the universe like sky, or sun, for he was the creator of the whole world. But the idea of spirit finds a natural counterpart physically in light: and so he was regarded as dwelling in a realm of radiance above the heavens of Good Thought, Good Word, and Good Deed (see III). There he maintained the world he had created, there he produced welfare with ceaseless beneficence; there he ruled as 'the most liberal king,' and ever kept 'the true account' of good works and sins. So he was secure from all contact with evil; his being was absolute holiness, perfect purity, unalterable justice, mercy that never tired.

This glorious Spirit was not, however, alone. Around him were six great Angels (as we might call them), the 'Immortal Holy Ones,' who ful-

filled his will. There was the Kingdom or Sovereign Power; there were the Good Mind, the Righteous Order, and Holy Piety; and lastly a pair known by the names Perfection and Immortality. To these a seventh angel of Obedience was sometimes added. These heavenly powers belonged to the sphere of light. Through them was the divine purpose to be wrought in the world, and the kingdom to be established not only in heaven but also on earth. 'The kingdom is the Lord's,' sang the ancient poets, 'we praise the good kingdom.' To adopt the true religion is 'to give the kingdom to Ahura': and the third line of the most sacred prayer, still recited daily by the modern Parsee, affirmed that 'he gives the kingdom to the Lord, who gives succour to the poor.' And so the service of man was recognised as the truest worship of God.

But over against the kingdom of Ahura lay the counter-realm of 'the Other,' Angra Mainyu (as he was afterwards called, abbreviated to Ahriman), the evil Spirit. He is emphatically 'the Lie.' Falsehood is his native element, darkness his symbol in the outer world. Between him and Ahura is incessant war. How this was begun is not related; it would seem to be due to the perpetual antagonism of two opposing principles. They are described as 'primeval spirits'; the one stands for 'a better' thing, the other for a 'worse,' 'as to thought, as to word, and as to deed.' 'And between these two let the wisely-acting choose aright. Choose ye not as the evil doers.'

Below Angra Mainyu are all manner of lesser powers, who work all evil deeds of sin and shame. Theirs is the realm of suffering and of vice. Sickness and death, the winter's cold, famine, blight, barrenness, drunkenness and unchastity, envy, deceit,—these are the products of their baleful activity. And in odious alliance with them are all heretics and unbelievers, for opposition to the truth is devil's work. Their home is in the north, the land of gloom and desolation; they haunt the wastes and the mountains; they belong to the abyss, or are located in hell, in the centre of the earth.—How shall they be overcome? Who will conquer them and drive them out from a world that was intended to be the scene of light and order, of beauty, truth, and good? When will the 'kingdom' come, and the will of God be done on earth even as in heaven?

III.

The view of the world in the ancient hymns handed down by the Persians, is technically known as Dualism. In its simplest form it consisted in the belief that a Power of Good was opposed by a Power of Evil. There was 'the Lord Omniscient,' and there was 'the Other,' 'the Lie,' 'the Evil Spirit.' When would the war between them end, and which would win? It was indispensable to religious faith that the victory should lie with the good. The Creator of the world, perfect in wisdom and holiness, could not be for

ever baffled. For whatever reason 'the Other' was permitted for a time to intrude into Ahura's realm, there must be an end set to his wickedness. The Greeks had already found this out in the fourth century B.C. The great hope took forms wholly unknown to them before, and we may the more confidently believe their testimony because it is entirely confirmed by the sacred books of Zoroastrianism. The triumph of Ahura would be brought about, they reported, by a general resurrection, and the abolition of Hell. Resurrection—that is a new word. You may search for it in vain in the literature of Israel up to this date, though you will meet with it later. No Greek could have invented it. What then is the teaching of the ancient Persian scriptures on this high theme? How did they try to 'justify the ways of God to man'?

Even in the earliest poems of all, the Gāthās (see p. 50), this expectation is already fully formed, though many details meet us for the first time in later texts. It rests on the conviction that Ahura, who knows all things, is the discerning arbiter, the discriminating lord, who will give what is due alike to the good and to the evil. So Zarathustra boldly enquires,—

'This then will I ask thee, O Ahura Mazda, as I seek thy counsel once again. What events are coming now, and what events shall come in the future? . . . What are the awards for the wicked, and how shall they be in the final state of completion? . . . Yea, I would ask thee such a thing as this : how such an one as he, who,

with wise action, has striven to promote Thy holy Rule (*Khshathra*, kingdom) over house and region and province, in the Righteous Order and in truth, how he may become like thee, O Great Creator, Living Lord ?'

The answer is that for the wicked there shall be long life in darkness, with foul food and speech of the lowest: but to the saints Ahura Mazda will give Universal Weal and Immortality, and the Good Mind's vigorous might. Or, as it is elsewhere summed up briefly, 'for the wicked the worst life,' 'for the holy, the best mental state.' The verdict on each one will be pronounced at the Judge's Bridge, the wondrous rainbow arch stretching across the world. Thither the believers will be led by Zarathustra himself: the evil-minded will be sent to the abode of 'the Lie,' and the faithful will be welcomed by Ahura Mazda to the 'Home of Song.' There they will remain in their allotted pain or bliss, till the hour of the great consummation. For at length the long struggle shall be ended, and the 'Demon of the Lie' shall be delivered 'into the two hands of the Righteous Order.' This would be the hour of 'renewal,' the joyous season of progress, the *frasho-kereti*, the 'forwards-making,' which came to include in it the whole complex of events, the resurrection, the new heavens and earth, the recovery of hell, and the beginning of eternal happiness. Well might the poet of the Gāthās who beheld these visions of glory, devoutly utter the prayer, 'May we be such as bring on this great reno-

vation, and make this world progressive, . . . for there will our thoughts be tending where true wisdom shall abide in her home.'

In later portions of the Zend Avesta, and in a subsequent work compiled out of older scriptures now lost (known as the *Bundahish*), these hints are worked out into a striking series of pictorial scenes. The soul of the righteous departed takes his seat near the head of the body, and for the first three nights tastes all kinds of pleasure. Then with the dawn, amid soft breezes and sweet scents, he sees a well-shaped maiden advancing to him. She is fair and bright, white-armed and tall, and she greets him thus, 'O thou youth of good thoughts, good words, and good deeds, of good religion, I am thy own conscience! . . . I was lovely and thou madest me still lovelier; I was fair, and thou madest me still fairer.' The evil soul, in like manner, sits in suffering amid wind and snow and stench, and in due course there appears before it a hideous woman, decayed and bandy-legged, who is the impersonation of shameful thoughts and words and deeds.

By these attendants is the soul accompanied to the Judge's Bridge. There stands Mitra 'the Friend,' and Srosh the angel of Obedience, and Rashnu, just and true; and Rashnu bears in his hand the golden scales in which all the past life of each one is weighed. It is the solemn hour of judgment. Four steps lead the righteous through the paradises of Good Thought, Good Word, Good Deed, into

the realm of Endless Lights, the Home of Song, where they behold the glory of Ahura and celebrate his praise. And four other steps conduct the wicked through the hells of Evil Thought, Evil Word, and Evil Deed, to the region of Endless Darkness. It is in the middle of the earth; the darkness is more than 'can be felt'; so solid and oppressive is it, it 'is fit to grasp with the hand, and the stench is fit to cut with a knife, and though a thousand men are being punished within a single span, they think they are alone, and the loneliness is worse than the punishment!'

But this punishment is not eternal. Its varying degrees admit of every kind of retributive penalty, proportioned to varying degrees of guilt, before the final expulsion of evil from the universe. At last, after thousands of years, nine thousand according to one text, the victorious Helper with his assisting powers appears. He is of the seed of Zarathustra, and his name designates him as the agent of the Resurrection, *Astvat-ereta*, 'He who makes the bodily creatures rise up.' The Persian doctrine seems to have excited the same kind of wondering doubt which the Christian teaching afterwards encountered in cultivated Greek minds in the second century, for instance, after our era. 'How,' asked Zarathustra, 'can a body form again?' If Ahura could create something originally out of nothing, it was replied, why could he not produce again that which had been?

So the solemn process would begin at its appointed season, and would proceed with a stately order, extending over fifty-seven years. Each one would rise at the place where he had died; and soul and body would know each other and mysteriously unite. Then father and child, husband and wife, kinsmen and friends, would meet with mutual recognition, and the great assembly of the risen dead would be gathered. In their past characters would they appear, and each one would see his own good and evil. Then follows a striking touch, describing the shame of the righteous who practised righteousness themselves, yet neglected to instruct others:—

'In that assembly whatever righteous man was friend of a wicked one in the world, and the wicked man complains of him who is righteous, thus, "Why did he not make me acquainted, when in the world, with the good deeds which he practised himself?" if he who is righteous did not inform him, then it is necessary for him to suffer shame accordingly in that assembly.'

At this point the righteous and the wicked are once more parted, and severally return for three days and nights to heaven or hell. Families are broken up, for the faithful parent may have an unworthy son, and brothers may be of opposite character. Then the evil will weep for themselves, and the good will weep for the evil. But the separation is not for long. A mighty change takes place upon the earth, beginning with distress as when a wolf falls upon a sheep. The mountains are dissolved

in flame; and a vast flood of molten metal spreads over the world. Through this all must pass. To the holy it is like a bath of milk; the ungodly find in it the trial and purifying of fire. It is the process of regeneration, which ushers in the new life. Then families and friends are reunited amid affectionate enquiries, and a great song goes up from the redeemed, for 'all men become of one voice and administer loud praise to Ahura Mazda and the archangels.' A mighty sacrifice is performed by the Helper, and a life-giving drink is prepared from it, by which the whole race is endued with immortality. But in the resurrection there is no more marrying or giving in marriage.

It is a strange picture according to our notions:—a level earth, from which all mountain heights have been melted away; and a level humanity, where the adults are all forty years of age, and the children all fifteen! But it contains one feature of supreme importance. Not only are disease and death brought to nought, and perpetual welfare and happiness secured; but the regeneration implies that the goal of progress has been won, and the will of Ahura is finally realised without obstacle or opposition. For the last act in this great drama is the destruction of the powers of evil. The angels of Good Thought, Righteous Order, the Kingdom, Universal Weal, etc., with all their attendant ministers, band themselves together for one final attack: they seize on their opposites,

and overcome them. At last only the Evil Spirit Angromainyu (Ahriman) and the wicked Serpent Az remain. Then Ahura Mazda himself appears on the scene as the great world-priest, accompanied by Srosh, the angel of Obedience, and the two evil adversaries are defeated. In their impotence they rush back into gloom and darkness. The molten metal burns up the serpent, and the stench and pollution of hell are consumed. Then the hiding-place in which Ahriman took refuge is put into the metal also; and the grand conclusion is reached—'Ahura brings the land of hell back for the enlargement of the world; the Renovation arises in the Universe by his will, and the world is immortal for ever and everlasting.'

Such was the greatest effort of ancient thought before our era to represent the kingdom of heaven on earth, and to picture humanity as realising the divine will. Here was the fulfilment for all of the aspiration of the saints, 'May we see thee, and may we, approaching, come round about thee, and attain to entire companionship with thee.'

IV.

When we speak of the influence of one people upon another, how can we detect it, what proof can we have of it? When locomotives were invented, when railways were first laid, in this country, the other nations of Europe quickly learned to make steam-engines,

to build railway-lines, and to run trains. When Darwin's great book on the 'Origin of Species' was translated into foreign languages, everyone could see the medium through which his ideas were spread. When Augustine and his comrades of the Roman mission landed on these shores thirteen hundred years ago, they brought with them the institutions of the Church and the scriptures in the Latin tongue, and the Christianity of the sixth century was transplanted to this country.

No such complete transmission is to be seen in the case of the beliefs described in previous papers. We must be content with scantier indications. But sometimes the presence of a single word is a sufficient clue. The supreme council of the Jews, before which Jesus was tried, was called the Sanhedrin. That is the Jewish form of the Greek *synedrion*; and this name is a clear indication of the introduction of Greek ideas into Palestine, just as our word Parliament takes us back to the French of the Middle Ages. So when Jesus was asked whether it was lawful to pay *census* to Cæsar, and they brought him a *denarius*, we know at once that we are in the presence of Roman administrators with their Latin terms.

In other cases, however, the traces are less definite still. We may not be able to show identity, but we may prove similarity: and it may become highly probable that the similarity is due to the influence of one set of beliefs upon another. Such influence is only possible when there are deeper

resemblances behind. In the sphere of religion such resemblances must be sought in the moral and spiritual ideas which have gathered around the thought of God and his purpose for the world.

Now there were many such resemblances between the thought of God as it was expressed by the Hebrew prophets and psalmists, and as it was expressed by the ancient seers of Iran. Both regarded him as the creator of the world and the lord of men and angels. Both called him king, and found the sphere of his kingdom in earth and heaven, in the generations of humanity, and the powers of the sky. Both discerned in the light the symbol of his truth: both found in the order of the universe the manifestation of his wisdom; both ascribed to him the sublime commands of conscience; and both saw his righteous will for man embodied in a sacred law, delivered to a prophet, and treasured by a special people. Moreover, both believed that the one God must at length make himself known to all, must be the object of one worship, and vanquish all opposing forces of evil with a lasting victory of good. And both arrived at the idea of *judgment*, though they at first applied it differently. Israel expected Yāhwé to judge the nations; the Iranian faith anticipated a judgment for the soul. The prophet Joel beheld the great tribunal established in the valley of Jehoshaphat (*Joel* iii. 14); the Gāthās placed it at the 'Judge's Bridge,' or the 'Bridge of Assembly.'

There was, therefore, a common

ground of religious faith, exhibited in the scriptures of the two peoples, across which influences might possibly pass from one to the other. That there was historical opportunity for such transit is plain from the fact that Israel was for two hundred years subject to the Persian supremacy, and even after its overthrow, Jews continued to live on for centuries among the Persian people. Persian words found their way into Old Testament books: is it surprising that Persian ideas should also affect Hebrew thought? Some indications of this may be finally suggested here: though completer exposition of the subject must be reserved for some other opportunity.

(1) Ancient Hebrew teaching contained nothing like the Persian 'dualism' already described (p. 52). But the latest writings of the Old Testament show that the idea of a Power of Evil over against the Power of Good had begun to occupy the Jewish mind. Consider, for example, the remarkable circumstance that the author of *Chronicles*, writing in the Greek age, ascribes to Satan an action which the older book of *Samuel* ascribes to Yahwé:—

2 Sam. xxiv. 1.

And again the anger of Yahwé was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them, saying, Go, number Israel and Judah.

1 Chron. xxi. 1.

And Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel.

Who was Satan? In the New Testament, of course, he is identified with

the Devil, or the Evil One. But the word originally means nothing more than 'adversary.' Now no such 'adversary' among the higher powers is ever mentioned until after the Captivity, in the Persian age. Under the rule of Satan, according to later Jewish thought, were vast hosts of demons, agents of mischief and suffering of every kind. It is highly probable that the belief in their activity, as we find it in the New Testament, was largely stimulated by Persian influence. Other notions, no doubt, were not without their share in the general growth of Jewish demonology; but one curious instance points distinctly in this direction. In the charming romance known as the Book of Tobit, a demon is mentioned who bears the name Asmodai (iii. 8). That is most satisfactorily explained as *Aeshma* the demon (*daeva*), a figure already present in the Gāthās.

(2) According to the ancient Jewish ideas of death, the 'soul' of man passed into the darkness of the underworld, and there shared only in the dim shadow-being of a land of gloom and silence. 'To go down into the pit' was to lose all hold of light and life, for 'the dead praise not Yahwé,' as the Psalmists so often repeat. Yet by the time of Jesus a great change had come over this view of the common lot. To trace it fully would lead us through many interesting byways of Jewish thought. It must suffice now to point briefly to the result. The departure of the soul, so it was taught, was followed by no loss of conscious being.

Bands of ministering or destroying angels went forth to meet it (cp. *Luke* xvi. 22), and conveyed it to an appropriate destiny of bliss or pain. This is quite a new doctrine when compared with the ideas of the Old Testament. Here and there in the Psalter, it is true, the loftiest minds had begun to utter the fresh hope; but they could not convert it into a common faith. And yet in the days of Jesus, it had become so. Many causes may have contributed to this. There is some reason to think that the wide-spread ideas about the life to come which, under the general name of Orphic, had spread through Greece, and had been carried on Greek-speaking lips through the lands of the Levant, were not unknown in Palestine. But there is a more significant fact still. When Jesus promises pardon to the penitent thief upon the cross, he says, 'To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise.' Now 'Paradise' is a *Persian* word.

(3) One item more demands a word of consideration. It was one of the characteristics of Hebrew prophecy that it continually looked to a new age of righteousness, when the whole people should realise under the existing forms of society the sovereign purpose of God. It often associated with that expectation ideas of the sympathy of nature with man, manifested by a brighter sun, a more fertile soil, a reign of peace among the beasts of prey. But the older thought had never fully faced the question of death. Would this awful power continue to remove gene-

ration after generation of the children of men? Or would it be in any way possible to escape its grasp? When imagination first addressed itself to this theme, it could apparently get no further than the conception of a return to the longevity of patriarchal times. In the new heavens and the new earth (*Isaiah* lxxv. 17-20), said one of the prophets of the Persian age, life should be so prolonged that death at the age of a hundred years would be like dying in childhood. But might it not be possible to advance a step further, and conceive death as abolished altogether? A later seer still reached this loftier height. Out of the troubles (it would seem) besetting his country in the disastrous days which preceded the collapse of the Persian empire, he looked out on the future, and pictured the deliverance in the figure of a banquet on the holy mountain, to which Yahwé would invite all peoples (*Isaiah* xxv. 6-8). There the Lord of life would remove from the nations the veil that was spread over them, the covering of mortality which shrouded their eyes and dulled their hearts. He would swallow up death for ever, and wipe away tears from off all faces, for the sorrow of parting should no more fall upon the homes of men. It was a glorious hope. But what of those who had already passed away before the grim figure ceased to claim his prey? Could they be recalled, and rescued from the grasp of earth to which they had been consigned? It was at least a pious aspiration: 'May thy dead

live; may thy dead bodies arise! Awake and sing, ye dwellers in the dust, for thy dew is as the dew of lights, and the earth shall cast forth the shades' (*Isaiah* xxvi. 19).—By such hints as these was the way prepared for a more definite doctrine of Resurrection. It first appears in one of the latest books of the Old Testament, the book of Daniel (165-164 B.C.), forerunner of that literature of the 'last things' which so much occupied Jewish thought in the days of Jesus and the early Church: 'Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting abhorrence' (*Dan.* xii. 2). Round this expectation gathered a whole group of ideas by no means unlike the elements of Iranian hope, though they naturally had their own Jewish forms. Chief among these was the Resurrection, which formed in some cases the prelude, in others the sequel, to the great Judgment. The entire process was sometimes known as the 'Renewal,' or 'Renovation' (cp. p. 53), or as it is phrased in *Matt.* xix. 28, the 'Regeneration' or 'Re-birth.' Then all the hostile powers would be brought to nought, *1 Cor.* xv. 24, the last of them being Death, which the Apostle Paul expected Messiah himself to subdue, *1 Cor.* xv. 26,—Messiah, who would then resign to the Father his delegated power, 'that God may be all in all.'

So in the New Testament do we see the confluence of ideas along two great lines of thought represented imagina-

tively by Moses and Zoroaster. In the mind of Jesus they win new force; he alone was able so to conceive the kingdom of God as to make it still the symbol of our highest hope and perpetual endeavour.

J. ESTLIN CARPENTER.

A Peep at the Infant Class.



ABOUT ten minutes before the opening of school 'teacher' appears with a bright 'Good morning, little children,' which is responded to very heartily. After the opening service, conducted by the superintendent, is over; and when the other classes have been dismissed, the infant room is thoroughly aired and the late children are admitted. Early tickets are distributed to those who have earned them, and the late children are urged to make an effort to come in time next Sunday.

Then the infants commence to say their hymn, line by line, after the teacher, who sings it to them as soon as they have fairly mastered the words; then all sing it together. This hymn learning is for the children the hardest part of their morning's work; and so a few simple exercises for arms, head and feet, rising together and sitting down again at a given sign, etc., now makes a pleasant change for them. Then, at once, before the children have a chance of getting fidgetty, 'teacher' commences the following story:

KING ARTHUR'S SWORD AND SIR BEDIVERE.

'Long ago there lived a king called Arthur; he ruled over a large country which was surrounded on all sides by enemies. One day, as King Arthur was sitting by the side of a lake, thinking of plans to overcome these enemies, he noticed a little ripple in the middle of the lake; and presently a beautiful maiden's arm, clad in mystic white, appeared above the water's edge, clasping in the hand a magnificent jewelled sword. Then King Arthur heard a mysterious voice say, "I am the lonely maiden of the lake. For many years I have been working at this sword for you. Take it, and with its help conquer your enemies!" With these words the lonely maiden of the lake swung the sword three times round in the air, and with a mighty hurl, flung the sword so that it fell at King Arthur's feet. The king picked it up, wondering at its beauty. Then he carefully carried the sword home to his palace; and with the help of some brave knights, King Arthur by degrees conquered all his enemies.

'Well, for many, many years peace reigned over the country; the farmers tilled the ground, and gathered in their harvest of corn; the sheep and cattle grazed peacefully on the hillside with no more fear of being disturbed by dreadful fighting. And so time passed on, until one day a messenger brought the news to King Arthur that a very terrible enemy was advancing.

The king called his brave knights about him, and they took counsel with each other. The army was gathered together and they all marched boldly forward to meet the enemy. The battle raged long and fiercely, and it was not until the sun was setting that the enemy was at last conquered and driven back. Yes, the enemy was conquered, but poor King Arthur was badly wounded.

'Sir Bedivere, one of the brave knights, soon found the dying king, and carried him to a chapel close by. Then King Arthur bade Sir Bedivere listen to his last command, and said, "Sir Bedivere, I am dying, and there is just one thing I want thee to do for me. Take my sword, for I shall use it no more, and return it to the lonely maiden of the lake."

'Sir Bedivere took the sword and hastened down to the water's edge. He looked at the sword; it sparkled most temptingly, and he said to himself, "Surely it is a pity to throw this beautiful sword into the lake. I will just hide it in the rushes." So he hid the sword and returned to the king, who asked him eagerly, "What hast thou seen, or what hast heard?" Sir Bedivere answered, "I heard the ripple washing in the reeds and the wild water lapping on the crag." "Ah," said the king, "thou hast not done what I bade thee. Go once more, and this time do not fail." Again Sir Bedivere hastened down to the lake. He picked up the sword from the rushes; the jewelled hilt shone more

brilliantly than ever, and its beauty dazzled him. He said to himself, "The king is ill, he knows not what he says. I'll hide the sword yet again." Sir Bedivere returned. The king looked at him and knew. Then he cried, "Thou hast deceived me, thou hast not done my bidding; yet—for man may fail in duty twice and the third time may repent and be obedient—get thee hence, and return the sword to her who gave it me." Sir Bedivere went once more; again he took up the sword; and this time, though it shone as brightly as ever, Sir Bedivere thought of his duty to his dying king, and he hurled the sword into the lake. Then suddenly there was a flash of lightening and a peal of thunder, and as the sword reached the water, a beautiful arm, clad in mystic white, rose above the water's edge. It grasped the sword and drew it under. Sir Bedivere returned to the king who instantly exclaimed, "Now I see that thou hast done my bidding. What hast thou seen, or what hast heard?" Sir Bedivere told the king all that had happened, and he was satisfied.

Then King Arthur bade Sir Bedivere carry him out into the air and down to the lake. While resting there the king saw, coming through the mist, a strange barge with three beautiful angels on it. They beckoned to the king, who told Sir Bedivere to place him on the barge. Then the king bade Sir Bedivere a loving farewell; and the barge, with the king and the beautiful angels on it, disappeared

in the mist. And thus the great King Arthur passed away.

* * * * *

After a few words upon the story, about the duty of obedience, the children enjoy some kindergarten games, the 'Golden Boat' by Mrs. Ormiston Chant being very popular. A little marching up and down between the forms seems to be greatly appreciated. When the time comes for dismissal, the teacher looks out for the row of children sitting the most quietly; and, as she raises her hand, the children of that row stand up and pass out, each one receiving a good ticket if it has been earned; and so on, row by row, until the whole class is dismissed.

E. C. TURNER.

WHAT I WOULD DO.

If I were a rose
On the garden wall,
I'd look so fair

And grow so tall;
I'd scatter perfume far and wide,
Of all the flowers I'd be the pride,
That's what I'd do
If I were you,
O little rose!

If I were a bird
With a nest in a tree,
I would sing a song
So glad and free,
That birds in gilded cages near,
Would pause, my wild sweet notes to hear.
That's what I'd do
If I were you,
O gay, wild bird!

Fair little maid
 If I were you,
 I should always try
 To be good and true.
 I'd be the merriest, sweetest child,
 On whom the sunshine ever smiled.
 That's what I'd do
 If I were you,
 Dear little maid !

Selected.

The Sunday School Library.

IN consequence of the increase of Public Libraries and other Educational Institutions, it is frequently asked, doubtfully, if the Sunday School Library has still a function to fulfil?

I think we shall agree that it has, if we consider, first, that when a working lad leaves school, at eleven or twelve years of age, he frequently regards reading as a bore—a task from which he is glad to be free. He has not yet learned to find any pleasure in reading, and, indeed, the Public Library does not admit him until it is often too late for him to do so.

The rich can, of course, provide the best and most attractive books for their children during their earliest years, and those of us who think, must realize sometimes what a great difference this must make to the young lives we are training.

We should as soon think of depriving our children of their bread and butter

as of taking away their books. The great majority of people, however, are unable to purchase books except to a very limited extent, and some cannot do so at all.

Now, I believe that every Sunday school should endeavour to make this provision for those who are unable to do it for themselves, and should set apart a sum every year for the purchase of new books for the children.

Our School Library ought to contain the best books for children that can be bought—the best written, the best illustrated and the best bound. Thus a delight in books will be fostered as soon as the child can read. Then by having a good selection of books to suit each successive period of the child's life, a constant habit of reading may be formed and an abiding affection for books increase with the child's growth. If we can only do this we are enabling the young people of our large towns to withstand many of the temptations which beset them.

But to do so means an ever-increasing library of modern and attractive books. To fill a series of shelves with the musty volumes of our long-departed youth, which we have kindly sent to the school because we want them out of the way, is useless.

The modern child has seen, if only occasionally, books that are a pleasure to look at, and he wants more. He will not read your ancient, grimy-looking volumes, be they ever so good for him, if he can only obtain the much more beautiful books now produced for

young people of all ages. For this rejection of the ugly good for the beautiful good, he is not to be blamed. It is one of the ways in which his own tastes are being unconsciously improved.

The first business of the Sunday School Library, therefore, is to make our children into book lovers. Having done this there will be plenty of time and opportunity to get them to read books for the sake of the instruction they contain.

For this work of providing our Sunday scholars with the best books obtainable the aid of the well-to-do is necessary; but this ought not to be difficult to secure, when the beneficence of the work is once realized, and we awaken to the fact that this is just one of the very best ways in which we can prove the reality of our sense of brotherhood to the children of the poor. To possess a fine private library may be a good thing, but to build up an extensive school library, where the books are read by a hundred persons instead of one, is very much better.

With regard to the practical working of the library, I can but give you the results of my own limited experience.

Over eleven years ago we had, at our school, a collection of ancient literature called a library, which was closed for lack of readers.

We determined to make a fresh start. We begged about £30, and spent the greatest portion on children's books. Some novels of the best kind were purchased for the elders. Every year since then we have expended from

£20 to £30, until now we have over 2,000 volumes on our shelves. We purchase each year all the best children's annuals, such as Chatterbox, Little Folks, St. Nicholas, Nister's and many others. Then we obtain all the good fairy tales we can hear of. Besides Grimm's and Andersen's stories and the usual nursery tale and rhyme books, we have Mr. Lang's Red, Blue, Green, and Yellow Fairy Books, Dr. George Macdonald's well-known stories, Judge Parry's Katawampus and Butter Scotia and many other modern fairy tales of a similar kind. All these are read and re-read with avidity.

It is true that some of the books are only telling the same story in different language, but that is immaterial. A child is as much interested in reading and comparing two editions of a fairy tale as a literary man is in perusing two histories of the same period.

For boys and girls of medium age we have purchased all the books of Louisa Alcott, Mrs. Molesworth, Mrs. Burnett, Evelyn Everett Green, Rev. J. J. Wright, and other well-known writers. And for those of more advanced years, the historical stories of Prof. Church and G. A. Henty, the school stories of Canon Farrar, Thos. Hughes, Talbot Baines Reed, and Ascott R. Hope. Also stories of adventure by Jules Verne, Manville Fenn, and other authors.

Many of our older scholars, who have long been diligent readers, have now got beyond the story book and are interested in books of a higher type.

And this has happened in many cases where we are confident that, but for our library, the love of reading would never have been cultivated at all. To meet the needs of those who have reached a higher level we have provided the best novels by the best authors, and a good collection of miscellaneous literature—scientific, theological, and biographical.

For these advantages we charge our scholars under twelve years of age one halfpenny per month, and for those over that age one penny per month, believing that they appreciate the benefits conferred upon them all the more, if they have to pay some little towards the cost of them.

To the Sunday school, aiming at being the centre of the moral forces brought to bear upon the young, an effective library should be considered an indispensable adjunct; and those who will undertake the organization of one, will, I am confident, behold in a very few years, some excellent results proceeding from their labours.

J. ENTWHISTLE.

‘Books are the masters who instruct us without rods, without hard words and anger, without clothes or money. If you approach them, they are not asleep; if, investigating, you interrogate them, they conceal nothing; if you mistake them, they never grumble; if you are ignorant, they cannot laugh at you.’

CHAUCER.

SCANDAL.

A WOMAN to a holy father went
Confession of sin was her intent;
And so her misdemeanours, great and small,
She faithfully rehearsed them all:
And chiefest in her catalogue of sin,
She owned that she a tale-bearer had been,
And borne a bit of scandal up and down
To all the long-tongued gossips of the town.

The holy father for her other sins
Granted the absolution asked of him;
But while for all the rest he pardon gave,
He told her this offence was very grave,
And that to do fit penance she must go
Out by the wayside where the thistles grow
And gather the largest, ripest one,
Scatter its seeds, and that when this was done

She must come back again another day
To tell him his commands she did obey.
The woman thinking this a penance light,
Hastened to do his will that very night,
Feeling right glad she had escaped so well.
Next day but one she went the priest to tell;
The priest sat still and heard her story
through,

Then said, ‘There’s something still for you
to do;

Those little thistle-seeds which you have
sown,

I bid you go, regather, every one.’

The woman said, ‘But father, ’twould be
vain

To try to gather up those seeds again;
The winds have scattered them both far
and wide

Over the meadowed vale and mountain
side.’

The father answered, ‘Now, I hope from
this

The lesson I have taught you will not miss;
You cannot gather back the scattered seeds,
Which far and wide will grow to noxious
weeds,

Nor can the mischief once by scandal sown
By any penance be again undone.’

—Selected.

A Short Introduction to the Book of Psalms.

A.—THE PSALMS AS HEBREW HYMNS.

I.

THE Book of Psalms was a collection of Hebrew hymns. It was compiled for use in the Temple at Jerusalem, which the Hebrews built in the year 519 B.C., on their return from their imprisonment in Babylon. Not one stone of that building is left upon another, but the glorious hymn-book remains, the noblest collection of religious poems in the world.

It went, however, through many editions before it became what it now is. We have it in its latest form, consisting of a hundred and fifty poems of very different date and authorship. It is divided into five sections, probably to correspond with the five divisions of the Hebrew Law,—or ‘Pentateuch.’ You will find them marked in the Revised Version, each with a doxology at the end, except the last, which closes with a hymn of praise. They are: (1) *Pss. i.-xli.*; (2) *Pss. xlii.-lxxii.*; (3) *Pss. lxxiii.-lxxxix.*; (4) *Pss. xc.-cvi.*; and (5) *Pss. cvii.-cl.* But this five-fold division is based on a much older *three-fold* division, thus: (1) *Pss. i.-xli.*; (2) *Pss. xlii.-lxxxix.*; and (3) *Pss. xc.-cl.* The three groups seem to have had a separate origin. The first is almost entirely, the second, partly, ascribed to David. In the former the sacred name *Iahveh* is

very frequently employed, while in the latter it is as much as possible avoided. And two psalms appear in both sections: *Ps. xiv.* = *Ps. liii.*, and *Ps. xl. 13-17* = *Ps. lxx.* The first group was probably *the original psalter*, and the second group (in the order, however, *Pss. li.-lxxii.*, *xlii.-l.*, *lxxiii.-lxxxiii.*) formed a supplement which was afterwards added. Then the third group, consisting of Temple songs ascribed chiefly to Asaph and the ‘Sons of Korah,’ including a poem already existing in the older book (*Pss. cviii.* = *Ps. lvii. 7-11* and *Ps. lx. 5-12*), may have been a second supplement, which, in time, was taken up into the main collection.

There are many signs of this long and gradual compilation. Some of the poems have got divided, others are hinged together. For instance, *Pss. ix.* and *x.* were originally one psalm, consisting of twenty-two verses beginning with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet. *Pss. xlii.* and *xliii.* are one psalm, with a refrain occurring three times: *vv. 5, 11, xliii. 5.*

But *Ps. xix.* is two psalms, consisting respectively of *vv. 1-6* and *7-14*. Similarly *Pss. xxiv. 1-6, xxiv. 7-10, xxvii. 1-6, xxvii. 7-14, xxxvi. 1-4, and xxxvi. 5-12* are independent poems which have become united to others. And *Ps. lv.* seems to be a remarkable combination. Verses 1-3, 9-11, 15-19, 23, make a complete poem, a fierce cry for vengeance against a party, a wicked, hostile set in Jerusalem. But verses 4-8, 12-14, 20-22 are also a complete

poem, a cry of pathetic sadness at the treachery of an individual, and that a friend.

Many minor proofs of revision appear from a study of the *rhythm* of the psalms. There was neither metre nor rhyme in Hebrew poetry. The lines did not consist of regular numbers of syllables, nor did they end with similar sounds. They were *rhythmic*. They contained words which were *accented* by the twang of the harp or the voice of the singer or the beat of his foot, at regular intervals. And the lines were mostly in pairs, usually expressing the *same* thought in different language, as in the following :—

‘O Lord, rebuke me not in Thine indignation,

‘Neither chasten me in Thy displeasure.’
—Ps. vi. 1.

Sometimes the second line of the pair *added* to the thought of the first, as in Ps. xli. 1 :—

‘Blessed is he that considereth the poor
and needy ;
The Lord shall deliver him in the time of
trouble.’

At other times the second line uttered a thought which *contrasted* with that of the first, thus :—

‘The Lord knoweth the way of the
righteous ;
But the way of the ungodly shall perish.’
—Ps. i. 6.

Some of the psalms are *alphabetical*,—that is, successive verses or half-verses or groups of verses begin with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Pss. ix. and x. (see above),

xxv., xxxiv., xxxvii., cxi., cxii., cxlv., and the great poem, Ps. cxix, are of this character. Others, such as xlii., xliii., xlv., lxxx., and cvii., are *strophic*, with a recurring refrain or chorus.

By carefully observing these forms we are able to trace many of the omissions and interpolations or other alterations made by the scribes in the formation and subsequent history of the psalter.

Of the authorship of individual psalms little or nothing is known. Though they are still sometimes called the ‘Psalms of David,’ it is doubtful whether they include anything from his hand. The headings, or titles, which ascribe many of the poems to him, are very late, and, as may be proved by the evidence of the poems themselves, mere guesses. Not more than one or two of the psalms, such as xix. 1-6 and xxiv. 7-10, can be as early as his reign (c. 1040-1000 B.C.). On the other hand, some of the psalms are the work of men who lived in the days of the Maccabees, a little more than a century and a half before Christ.

II.

In subject and spirit the psalms are extremely rich and varied. They have to do with all kinds of religious experience, public and private. Many of them are *patriotic* hymns. Pss. cv. and cvi. are noble thanksgivings for God’s guidance and discipline of Israel in history, and Ps. xlv. is a prayer for help in a time of national danger. Ps. lx. is a war-song after defeat. Ps.

lxxix. is a cry for vengeance on heathen enemies who have desolated the temple. *Ps.* xxiv. 7-10 is a kind of Hebrew 'Te Deum.' *Ps.* xx. is addressed to a king going forth to battle, and *Ps.* xlv. is a royal marriage hymn. *Ps.* xlviii. is a splendid song of pride and joy in Jerusalem:—

'Walk about Zion, and go round about her,
And tell the towers thereof.'

—*Ps.* xlviii. 11.

Ps. lxxxvii. expresses the deeper pride and joy in the Holy City as the 'spiritual metropolis of the world':—

'Glorious things are spoken of thee,
O city of God!
Yea, of Zion it shall be said,
"This one and that one was born in her."'

Others are connected with the great national festival of the *Passover*. *Ps.* cxix., the longest poem in the book, was sung by the Hebrews on their yearly journey to Jerusalem for this feast. *Pss.* cxx.-cxxxiv. are also Pilgrim Hymns, or 'Upgoing Songs,' which were sung by the people as they approached and entered the city. Zion was above them:—

'I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills
From whence cometh my help.'

—*Ps.* cxxi. 1.

The city was girt by its mountains:—

'The hills stand about Jerusalem:
Even so standeth the Lord round about his people.'

—*Ps.* cxxv. 2.

The Temple was near:—

'I was glad when they said unto me
"We will go unto the House of the Lord."'

—*Ps.* cxxii. 1.

And at last, within the Temple, they cried:—

'Behold, how good and joyful a thing
it is,
Brethren, to dwell together in unity.'

—*Ps.* cxxxiii. 1.

During the festival were sung the *Pss.* cxlii.-cxlviii., cxxxv., cxxxvi., known as the 'Hallel' hymns. The lamb was sacrificed:—

'Bind the sacrifice with cords
Yea, even unto the horns of the altar.'

Ps. cxviii. 27.

And the people rejoiced:—

'O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is
gracious,
Because His mercy endureth for ever.'

Ps. cxviii. 1.

Jesus would have joined in these various songs when, as a boy, he went up to Jerusalem with his parents, and afterwards when he joined in the *Passover* with his disciples.

Another group of thanksgiving hymns are *Pss.* cxlvi.-cl., of which cxlvii. and cxliii. are in praise of *Nature*, the former referring to a rare thing in Palestine, a severe winter. But the finest *Nature* hymn is *Ps.* civ., which is full of minute and brilliant description. *Ps.* xxix. describes a thunderstorm, and *Ps.* lxxv. is a harvest song. *Ps.* xix. 1-6 praises the glory of the sun and stars, and *Ps.* viii. contrasts the majesty of *Nature* with the majesty of the soul.

The problems of *the soul* are the leading theme of the psalms. The mingling of the Infinite with the finite in man, the wide gap between aspiration and achievement, the need of forgiveness, the want of strength and renewal, the sense of peace in God's presence, and of his righteous government of the world, the sorrow of sin and the gladness of pardon, the misery of poverty, ridicule, or disease, and the joy of health and success, and kindred experiences, find expression in the psalter as nowhere else, and make it a universal book of devotion. *Pss.* i., xv., and xxiv. 1-6 picture the true citizen of God, and *Ps.* xix. 7-14 is one of many that praise the moral law. *Pss.* xxxviii. and li. are deep cries of penitence, *Pss.* xxxix. and xc. are touching expressions of the transitoriness of the world, and *Pss.* xlii., xliii., lxiii., cxxxvii., are the lamentations of exiles. Comfort in God is to be found particularly in *Pss.* xxvii., xxviii. 6-9, xxxiv., xxxvi. 5-12, xxxvii., xlvi., lvii., lxii., lxxi., lxxiii., cvii., cxlii., cxlv., and in three psalms—xvi., xxiii., and cxxxix.—where faith rises to belief in a life to come. The last-named is perhaps the sublimest of all the psalms. Nowhere is there a deeper sense of God's spirit and influence in the soul.

This beautiful poem will illustrate a feature in the psalter which I must now mention with regret. The Hebrew genius for religion had at least one marked and deplorable limitation. It was *intolerant and unforgiving*. Some of the most terrible imprecations

ever uttered on man are to be found in the Old Testament. Many of the psalms are disfigured by vindictiveness. It is only natural in certain cases, as, for instance, in *Ps.* lxxix., which was written when Jerusalem and the Temple were laid waste, and in cxxxvii., when Babylon had fallen, for the sufferers to cry for vengeance. But the case is different in such psalms as xxvii., lxiii., and cxxxix., where the most beautiful devotion is disturbed by expressions of rivalry or revenge.

B.—THE PSALMS IN CHRISTENDOM.

I.

The Book of Psalms was perhaps the richest treasure inherited by Christianity from Judaism. At a very early period the Christians found comfort in it. They died repeating it in the amphitheatre or on the cross. And wherever the brave missionaries carried the gospel, to the mountains of Italy, the forests of Germany, or the shores of Britain, they took it with them, and taught it to the heathen children. The psalter became the great Christian hymn book in the monastery, the cathedral, and the homes and fields of the people. An early Christian, Sidonius Appollinaris, tells us how he saw the boatmen rowing their barges up stream and heard them singing the psalms. And Jerome urges a friend in Rome to leave the city and dwell in his village of Bethlehem, where, he says, the quiet is only broken by the psalms of the peasants at their work.

'Ploughman, reaper, and vinedresser chant their praises to God; the psalms are our love-songs, our pastorals, our instruments of husbandry.' And great kings, like Charlemagne and Alfred, loved the psalter. Charlemagne was particularly fond of the *Exurgat Deus*, the lxviii., which was called by Ealdhelm, the famous soldier-monk of Malmesbury, the 'Warrior-Psalm.' Another of his favourites was *Ps.* cxxxix. Alfred took pains that his sons should learn the psalms, together with the old English songs, and he himself carried about certain of the psalms written in a book, which Asser says he 'kept day and night in his bosom.' Then, in time, every member of the Church was taught, beside the Creed and Paternoster, the Seven Penitential Psalms, to help him against the Seven Deadly Sins. These psalms were xxxii., cxxx., vi., cxliii., cii., xxxviii., and li., being antidotes respectively to the sins of pride, envy, anger, sloth, avarice, gluttony, and lust. The Seven Deadly Sins and the Seven Penitential Psalms play a large part in mediæval literature, especially in the poetry of Dante. The psalter was frequently quoted by the great Italian. He had the *In exitu Israel*, the cxiv., chanted by spirits on their way to Purgatory, and other psalms in different parts of the healing mountain. For a long time the psalter was the only book of devotion among Christians, and then, when others were written, such as Augustine's 'Confessions,' and Thomas à Kempis'

'Imitation of Christ,' and the various breviaries and prayer-books, they were practically based upon it and filled with its aspirations.

The psalms, again, were much used for the dying and over the dead. When a monk was 'sick unto death' his brethren in the monastery laid him down before the altar in the chapel and softly chanted the psalms until his spirit had passed away. In this manner most of our old English saints, such as Bede, Ealdhelm, Benedict Biscop, Cuthbert, and Oswald of York, expired, and the words chanted at the moment of death were carefully remembered. And when, outside the monastery, the folk of the parish were one by one laid in the 'God's acre,' the xlii. psalm,

'As the hart panteth after the water-brooks,

So panteth my soul after Thee, O God;'

or the cxxxix.,

'O Lord, Thou hast searched me and known me,

Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising;'

was said or sung over their graves.

II.

So it was in the old Catholic days, when the psalms were chiefly known in the Latin translation called the *Vulgate*. The Protestants turned them into the speech of the people, and gave them an even higher place. Luther and Calvin greatly valued the psalter. Luther's famous hymn, 'Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott,' which has been

named the 'Marseillaise of the Reformation,' is founded on the *Deus noster refugium*, *Ps.* xli. He is probably the author of the tune known as the 'Old Hundredth,' used for Kethe's metrical version of *Ps.* c., beginning:—

'All people that on earth do dwell.'

And of *Ps.* cxix. Luther wrote to his friend, the Abbot of Nuremberg: 'I have more especially attached myself to this psalm, and have in truth a sort of right to call it my own. It has deserved well of me: it has saved me from many a difficulty whence neither the emperor nor king nor wise men nor saints could have delivered me. It is, my friend, dearer to me than all the honours, all the power of the earth. I would not exchange it for the whole world if I could.'

The first printed version of the psalter in English was the work of Tyndale and Coverdale, 'during the sweating sickness and in exile' at Antwerp, in 1535. It was made partly from the Greek, partly from Wiclif's translation. Revised by Cranmer (1539), it was taken up into the English prayer-book, where it still is, the most musical of all versions in our language. More concise and correct is the beautiful translation in the Authorized Version (1611), which became the favourite of the Puritans. Huguenots and Puritans were equally attached to the psalter. Clement Marot in France, and Sir Philip Sidney and his sister in England, turned the psalms into verse. Spenser's poetry

can be annotated with references to the Psalms, and Shakespeare, who was not a Puritan, shows his love for them. Even Bacon, who was no poet, tried his hand at metrical versions of the Psalms. When, in 1588, the English were in dread of the Spanish Armada, and were putting forth their utmost energy to defeat it, they sang in all the churches the psalm which had been raised centuries before during the Danish invasions:—

'Lord, how are they increased that trouble me,
Many are they that rise against me.
Many a one there be that say of my soul,
"There is no help for him in his God."
But Thou, O Lord, art my defender,
Thou art my worship and the lifer-up of
my head.'

—*Ps.* iii. 1-3.

Devotion to the Psalms reached its most passionate height, perhaps, in the Covenanters and Ironsides. They fought for liberty with the psalms in their mouths. After the battle of Naseby, Cromwell wrote, with the cxv. psalm in his mind: 'This is none other but the hand of God, and to Him alone belongs the glory, wherein none are to share with Him.' At Dunbar, when the rising sun showed his army victorious, he cried in the words of the 'warrior-psalm' of Ealdhelm and Charlemagne, beginning:—

'Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered.'

And after the battle 'the Lord General made a halt and sang *Ps.* cxvii., till our horse could gather for the chase.' It was, therefore, called the 'Dunbar

psalm' by the Puritans. It is as follows:—

'O Praise the Lord, all ye nations,
Praise Him, all ye people.
For his merciful kindness is great to-
ward us,
And the truth of the Lord endureth for
ever.'

The Psalms, however, have been loved by men of all parties, ranks, and creeds. George Herbert, on one side, and Milton, on the other, were deeply attached to them. Both put some of them into verse. The beautiful paraphrase of *Ps. cxxxvi.* was said to have been written by Milton when he was a boy of fifteen:—

'Let us with a gladsome mind,
Praise the Lord, for He is kind;
For his mercies aye endure
Ever faithful, ever sure.'

Another famous paraphrase is Addison's version of *Ps. xix.*, which begins:—

'The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue ethereal sky,
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
Their great original proclaim.'

Cowper, Scott, and Wordsworth, are also poets who found inspiration in the psalms; and many great men in our own day, poets, statesmen, and others, such as Tennyson, Thackeray, Arnold, Gladstone, Livingstone, Carlyle, and Ruskin, have expressed their indebtedness to the psalter. The last-named, for instance, tells us of eight psalms which his mother taught him to learn; and how deeply he valued the psalter his works abundantly testify. Long and beautiful passages in his 'Modern Painters' are but commentaries on the

Psalms. Gladstone recently published a concordance of the Psalms, with a collection of his favourites; and he says: 'The Psalms have dwelt in the Christian heart, and in the centre of that heart; and wherever the pursuits of the inner life have been most largely conceived and cultivated, there and in the same proportion, the Psalms have towered over every other vehicle of general devotion.' And Carlyle, whose philosophy of life may be said to be rooted in the psalter, says of it: 'All earnest souls will ever discern in it the faithful struggle of an earnest human soul towards what is good and best. Struggle often baffled, sore baffled, down as into entire wreck; yet a struggle never ended; ever with tears, repentance, true unconquerable purpose, begun anew.'

III.

Now a book with such noble memories ought to be very precious to us. Its pages glow with the light of history. Its words have been sanctified by the men who repeated them and found joy in them. But before we can realise what this testimony means we must make the psalms our own. They must become dear to us, by mingling with our deeper experience, and aiding us to build up a good life. The psalter is above all a book of personal religion. It must not be treated as a mere classic or literary treasure. It throbs with life as new as ancient, as near to us as far away. It is a book of religion for the present day, suitable

for any condition in which a religious man may find himself, whether of joy or sorrow, health or sickness, amid the beauties of Nature or in 'the habitation of God's house,' in solitude or in the busy world, in contrition or in thankfulness. It is a book for those, who, in this nineteenth century, are face to face with the problems of 'whence? why? and whither? who feel the burden of sin, and the swiftness of life, and the kinship of the soul with the Invisible. The psalmist will help us to look below the surface of things, to hear the voice of God in the sound of the sea, to behold his light when the sun shineth, and to say of the stars: 'The heavens declare the glory of God.' When we feel the littleness of human thought and the inadequacy of human speech, the psalmist will help us to reach the ear of God. We may say with him: 'Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight.' When we are weighed down by our folly and sin, we can say with the psalmist: 'Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness; according to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions, wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.' And when our life seems trivial and worthless, we can say with him: 'Behold, Thou hast made my days as an hand-breadth, and mine age is as nothing before Thee'; and then, feeling overshadowed by God, we are strangely uplifted and hopeful.

Or, if in our despondency, we despair of the life to come, the psalms renew our sense of alliance with God, of mysterious relationship stronger than death. We say: 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.' 'Thou wilt not leave my soul to the grave, neither wilt Thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption. Thou wilt show me the path of life.' 'I shall be satisfied when I awake in thy likeness.'

LESSON NOTES ON SOME OF THE PSALMS.

PSALM VIII.

It begins and ends with the refrain:

'O Lord, our God,
How excellent is Thy name in all the earth.'

God's excellency consists in his creative power and wisdom, and in his dealings with man. How marvellous is the outward universe! The glory of God is in the heavens and the earth. And yet there is a deeper glory in the soul of man. The vastness of creation reduces man to physical insignificance:

'When I consider thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers,
The moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained,
What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?
And the son of man that Thou visitest him?'

But man's soul is above the physical universe. God did not merely create

him as He did the outward world.
He gave him something of Himself.

‘Thou hast made him but little lower
 than God.’

(Revised Version.)

Thought and Reason and Righteousness are divine elements which enable man to stand at the head of created things. All things are under his feet:—

‘All sheep and oxen,
 Yea, and the beasts of the field.’

And they who feel this relationship to God, and this superiority to material things, though they be babes and sucklings in worldly affairs, are strong with a strength not their own.

This thought, which is characteristic of the Hebrew genius, goes to the root of religion, and consequently the psalm has been greatly valued. Christ quoted it (*Matt.* xxi. 16), and St. Paul had it in mind in his great resurrection chapter, *1 Cor.* xv. St. Martin, the patron saint of Gaul, loved this psalm, and, partly through it, was made bishop of Tours (see Marson’s *Psalms at Work*, p. 11). Philip Howard remembered it when a prisoner in the Tower of London, and cut the words *Gloria et honore eum coronasti Domine* on the dungeon wall, where they are still to be seen. This psalm, also, in our own day, is a favourite with Mr. Gladstone.

PSALM XV.

This has been called by Mr. Ruskin (*Fora*, xxxvi.) the ‘Gentleman’s Psalm.’ It describes the Hebrew gentleman; and gentlemen of various nations and

times and beliefs have honoured its ideal. It was a favourite with St. Basil; it was quoted by our reformer poet of Wiclif’s time, William Langland; it was loved and commented on by the great scholar, Erasmus; and it is included in Mr. Gladstone’s selection from the Psalter. It specifies certain things which a gentleman does not do, and others which he does do.

Firstly, ‘he slandereth not with his tongue nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.’ He does not say behind people’s backs what he dare not say to their faces. He does not catch at subjects of blame. He is not a gossip, a busybody, a tale-bearer, a whisperer.

Secondly, ‘he does not do evil to his friend.’ He is a true friend. When his friend is poor or out of favour he does not find it inconvenient to know him. He does not forsake him in disgrace. Once his friend he is always his friend, and will stand by him to the last. He may not, of course, approve of what he has done, but he will never give him up. Friendship may alter and involve disappointment and grief, but with the true gentleman it never ceases to be *friendship*.

Thirdly, he ‘swareth to his own hurt and changeth not.’ He does not break his promise. If it is an honest one, he will keep it if he possibly can. His word can be relied upon. He is to be trusted. Whether to one above or below him in station, he will do what he has said.

Fourthly, he ‘putteth not out his

money to usury.' He does not lend in order to get more than his money is worth. He does not take advantage of others' necessities. He does not make gain out of another's poverty. He does not enrich himself at others' expense. He is not satisfied to live on his investments without doing good. He will not take benefits unless he can confer them. He is not satisfied to receive rent and dividends without making some adequate return to society by his usefulness. This is a golden text for capitalists and landlords. The real gentleman is not content to live on others. He will *deserve* what he gets. He cannot be happy unless he renders some equivalent for what he enjoys.

And fifthly, a gentleman will not 'take reward against the innocent.' He will not take a fee for robbing or trying to rob the just of their rights. He will not defend a guilty man against the upright.

These are five things which a true gentleman never does.

But it is not enough not to act dishonourably. Firstly, the gentleman 'walketh uprightly and worketh righteousness.' Yes, he *works*. He is not idle and useless. He is not a mere ornament. He uses his hands and brains, doing the best he can with them. The psalmist contradicts the old falsehood that a gentleman is a man without an occupation. Without an occupation of some kind a man cannot be a gentleman. And his occupation must be a clean and honest one.

Secondly, he 'speaks the truth in his heart.' He must be truthful in his mouth and in his soul, in word and thought and feeling. He does not persuade himself that he is honourable when he ought to know that he is a knave. He does not persuade himself that he is kind and charitable when he is harsh and cruel. He speaks the truth to himself. He cannot live on fancies and make-believe.

Thirdly, in his eyes 'a vile person is contemned.' The true gentleman despises, not the poor, not the ignorant, not the unfashionable, not those with plain features and plain clothes, but *the vile*—those who think vilely, and feel vilely, and act vilely; whose views and deeds are low, low in the sense of unjust, selfish, earthly, cynical.

On the other hand, he 'honours them that fear the Lord.' He esteems, not those in high places nor those who have money, but the righteous, the good. He looks up to people of character, men and women who are sincere and true, and fear God. He makes much of them. They do him good. He delights in their company and is thankful for their influence.

This is the true citizen, the dweller with God. He sojourns in God's tabernacle. Night by night he pitches his tent and lodges safely with God. Wind and rain do not disturb him. And after his journey, when travelling is done, and his wanderings cease, he arrives at the holy mountain. Though old age and sickness and death come upon him, and the world is shaken as

by an earthquake, he is not moved. He is in God's house, and whatever becomes of him he will be in God's keeping still.

PSALM XVI.

This has been called the 'Golden Psalm.' It is full of golden thoughts and golden hopes. It is one of the few psalms wherein trust in God rises to faith in immortality. At any rate, Christian feeling so interprets it. True religion says:—

'Preserve me, O God; for in Thee do I
put my trust.

I have no good beyond Thee.'

(Revised Version.)

Real piety does not seek to appease God by drink offerings (ver. 4), nor to get material benefits from Him. It is joy and strength and peace in *God Himself*, in his felt presence and sympathy with all our higher affections and undertakings. To feel God in this way is to know our 'goodly heritage' and to live in 'pleasant places.' Day and night the Spirit (supposed to be seated in the 'reins') instructs and satisfies the soul (v. 7). And more than this, according to the Christian interpreter, a deeper gladness enters into his heart, looking beyond the grave:—

'Thou wilt shew me the path of life;

In thy presence is fulness of joy;

At thy right-hand there are pleasures for
evermore.'

Mrs. Ewing's *Story of a Short Life* is full of the spirit of this beautiful little poem.

PSALM XIX.

A space in the Revised Version, between the sixth and seventh verses, rightly indicates that this psalm consists of two different poems. The first six verses are a psalm or portion of a psalm in praise of the outward universe, whereas the last eight verses are a psalm in praise of the Moral Law. The language and style as well as the thought are also distinctive. The former part is simple and archaic in manner, and if not the work of David *may* belong to his time; but the latter portion belongs to the peculiarly rich and comparatively late period of Hebrew literature, known as the Deuteronomic era.

Psalm viii. helps us to understand how these different hymns became united. Their respective thoughts balance and complete each other. The devout Hebrew of the age, when the Psalter was compiled, was not satisfied with the worship of God as Infinite Creative Power. He felt that it was only a higher form of heathen piety. He wanted also to worship God as the Infinite Righteousness which dwelt in the conscience and the moral constitution of the soul. The famous philosopher, Immanuel Kant, exactly expresses the two-fold thought in his well known saying—'There are two things which fill me with awe and reverence—the starry heavens above and the Moral Law within.'

The first six verses contain something of a nature-myth. The likeness of the sun's course through the sky

to the race of a young giant leaping out of his chamber and rejoicing in the contest suggests the childhood of religion. Nations find God earlier in outward than inward phenomena. They perceive him sooner in what strikes the senses than in what moves the affections or the conscience. Men are observant before they are reflective. They see God as Power in the wind and storm, in the progress of the stars, and the change of the seasons, before they discover Him in their own souls—in their sense of sin and goodness, their love and hope and moral discipline.

The eight last verses express this later, deeper religion. They speak of the law of the Lord which is righteousness, which makes the simple wise, enlightens the spiritual understanding, and rejoices the heart. To fear God and keep his commandments is better than gold and sweeter than honey. And in keeping them there is the great reward of deliverance from presumptuous sins and transgressions. This truth comes to nations and individuals in their maturity. It is the result not of seeing and hearing, but of upright and brave living, of suffering for duty and conquest over weakness. It is the result of growth and development in character.

The thought of the former Psalm has received enormous emphasis in our own day. Science has immeasurably enlarged our outlook into Space and Time. The universe we now know is unspeakably greater, more systematised, and more worthy of God than

it was as it appeared a hundred years ago. If our fathers found Divine Power in the toy of a world six thousand years old, what sort of a Being shall we worship within the baffling infinitudes which modern science reveals? How easy it is, and sometimes how refreshing it is, to forget ourselves in the vast Immensity that surrounds us, to lose all thought of self in the infinite order and beauty of things, and to calm our minds in contemplation of the wide-sweeping, steady, and dispassionate processes of Natural Law!

I say 'sometimes' it is well to feel this, not always. For it is not a complete religion. It is only a part, and a lesser part of worship.

The outward universe is not the only infinitude. On the contrary, there are other and more wonderful infinities than Time and Space in man's soul. There is infinity in *quality* as well as in *quantity*. The outward world is not so marvellous as the mind that explores it. The universe is unthinking, unconscious. It has none of the depths that exist in the reason, the will, the passions, the conscience, the longings, the personality of man. The profoundest mysteries of existence are not in the moon or the Southern Cross, but in the soul, in its sorrows, its joys, its aspirations, its prayers. God is the Creator of the universe, but He is the Father of our spirits. The universe is his handiwork, his property, but man is God's child.

Modern science has drawn our minds too much from the mystery and sacredness of life to the marvels of the cosmos, and has tended by magnifying creation to minimise man.

But man is an extraordinary combination of the trivial and the great. Bodily he is a feeble creature, a drop in the ocean of the Infinite; mentally he is utterly above anything he can touch or see. The whole visible creation is a mere gigantic machine, incomparably lower than thought and love. There is more in the mind of Christ, more of God in his devotion and self-sacrifice, than in all the flaming suns and their cooling planets.

There is more of God in the spider than in the moon. Do we realise that in every poor inmate of the workhouse, and every beggar in the street, there is unfathomable mystery, which science has never solved? Do we realise that when men die there pass from our sight and cognizance elements of being, mysterious, awful elements of being, more sacred than all the stars of heaven?

The stars are God's creatures, we are his family. They are his property, we are his children. The outward creation belongs to God, but God belongs to us. We must feel this wonderful, divine relationship. We must live as sons and daughters of God, not as elaborate products of the ground; and then, however homely or commonplace our duties may be, life will have a transfiguring significance, and our smallest thoughts and deeds will flash with divine meanings, and 'our briefest

moments will be rich with the pathos of eternity.'

PSALM XXIII.

This is called the 'Shepherd Psalm,' because it was long supposed to have been made by David when he kept his father's flock. It is certainly the work of one who knew and loved the pastoral life, in the upper valleys of Israel, but the reference to the House of the Lord (ver. 6), a regular term for the Temple, precludes a Davidic authorship. Nor is it the work of a young man. The poet looks back on life. God has been with him in youth, 'in green pastures,' and 'beside the still waters.' He has felt the Divine Presence in the fresh beauty of the world, in the loveliness of Nature, the happiness of health, the delight of comradeship. But he has known God in a deeper, sterner way. He has experienced the difficult and painful discipline of manhood in 'the paths of righteousness.' Beautiful dreams, which seemed so divine, have been followed by the hard facts of duty. But through the conflict with evil God has entered into him, and made his faith a great and glorious conviction. The religion of the poet has grown into the religion of the hero. And now, as he descends into the valley of old age, he is not afraid. Decay and death are before him, but the Immortal and Everlasting are at his side. Goodness and mercy have surrounded him all his life, and they will not forsake him at the last. The universe is God's Temple. The earth

is its threshold, the mountains are its pillars, the firmament is its roof. Everywhere is the divine Sanctuary, and wherever man goes, whatever becomes of him in death, he will be in God's Temple still. He can never be outside of it.

No psalm, perhaps, has been dearer to men than this one. It is so simple, and yet so profound. It was probably in the mind of Jesus when he spoke the parable of the Lost Sheep (*Matt.* xviii. 12 ff.), and again in the mind of 'St. John' when he wrote the tenth chapter of the Gospel. It was loved by St. Francis, and the saintly George Herbert, by Addison and John Byrom, and Heine, and a host of others. Mr. Ruskin tells us that it was the first psalm he learnt from his mother. Very many could say the same thing.

PSALM XXIV.

Like *Psalms* xix., this is made up of two poems. The first six verses recall *Psalms* xv. They describe the godly gentleman, the true worshipper on Zion. The world is not man's world, nor nobody's world but God's world, to the devout. He takes all he possesses as from God's hand. He is honourable in his dealings, and pure in his heart. He is not puffed up by vanity. He is without deceit, and for him is the blessing of integrity. He seeks after God, and perceives his face in everything.

The last four verses are a kind of Hebrew *Te Deum*. It was probably composed for entrance into the Temple

at its consecration, possibly for entrance into the older tabernacle, or into the gates of Jerusalem after a victory (*2 Sam.* vi.). The chorus sang the salutation,—

'Lift up your heads, O ye gates ;
And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors :
And the king of glory shall come in.'

Then one asked,

'Who is the king of glory ?'

And the chorus replied,

'The Lord strong and mighty,
The Lord mighty in battle.'

The next portion was shared in the same way by the singers.

Christians applied it to the gates of hell, which Christ the victorious Captain opened, to deliver men; and a famous old Mystery play was founded on the idea.

PSALM XXIX.

This is a fine old piece of poetry, describing a storm, much loved by Old English and Norman kings. The first two verses call for praise to God, the mighty storm-maker, from the strong sons of men. They are to worship Him (not as in the beautiful old translation, 'in the beauty of holiness,' but) in glorious array. For what has God done? His voice has spoken in the thunder, and the rain, and the wind sweeping over the whole country from Lebanon in the north to Kadesh in the south. The cedar trees have been blown down, and the mountains have trembled. Lightning has set fire to the forests, and elsewhere the trees

have been stripped of their leaves and branches. In their terror of the storm the cattle have prematurely given birth to their young. Everything in the Temple of the earth and sky shouts God's praise. For God is stronger than the tempest and the flood. He sits above them as their king. They are in his hand and their strength is his. He is a God to strengthen man, and to keep war from his chosen people. The poem delighted the warlike hearts of our forefathers, and delights still the hearts of brave and strong men.

PSALMS XLII., XLIII.

These two psalms make one poem, with the refrain occurring three times,
 'Why art thou cast down, O my soul?
 And why art thou disquieted within me?
 Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him,
 Who is the health of my countenance, and my God.'

The poet was a refugee or an exile in or near Mount Hermon, in the north of Palestine, not far from the sources of the Jordan. He may have fled thither during one of the sieges of Jerusalem, or have been in a troop of captives on the way to Babylon. His troubles and the neighbourhood are vividly depicted. To leave Jerusalem and the Temple and his fellow-worshippers, and all the sacred associations of his country, was like leaving God himself. When would he return? Would he again join in keeping holy day? Would he ever come to Zion again with an offering for the altar?

Would he ever escape from his heathen captors and persecutors who asked scornfully 'Where is thy God?' His soul is cast down within him. 'My tears are my meat day and night,' he says; 'I will remember thee, O God, from the land of Jordan and Hermon and the Hill Mizar.'

Then as he sat on the hillside, by the swift torrent which flowed down to form the river Jordan, lamenting his misfortunes and loneliness, suddenly a mountain deer sprang past him to the water. For a moment it arrested his attention. He could not help looking at the beautiful creature. But soon it drove his thoughts back upon himself. The thirsty animal, eager for the stream, expressed his own state of mind. 'As the hart,' he says, 'panteth after the water-brook, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God.'

Again, he hears the torrent leaping from precipice to precipice in a succession of cascades, calling as it were in triumph to itself; and this also utters his misery. It is like the flood of grief which overwhelms him. 'Deep calleth unto deep,' he says; 'all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.'

But he trusts in God. He will some day be delivered from the heathen, and will sing again upon the harp a song of joy on Zion:

'Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him
 Who is the health of my countenance and my God.'

Two thoughts in this psalm have a

wide application. The opening verses speak the universal longing of the soul, and, on this account chiefly, were of old read in the English burial service :

'As the hart panteth after the water brook
So panteth my soul after Thee, O God.

My soul thirsteth for God, for the living
God ;

When shall I come and appear before God ?'

The hart appears in the catacombs and in the later Christian art and heraldry, as the symbol of man in his yearning for the Divine.

The other thought is contained in verse 7, in the words, *Deep calleth unto deep*. There are depths in Nature and in human life which call to the depths in us. A lady critic once said to the great painter, 'Mr. Turner, I do not see a quarter of the things you put into your pictures.' He merely replied, 'Madam, don't you wish you could ?' He saw in Nature what was hidden from her. English society, again, bewigged and bepowdered, laughed at Wordsworth. It could not see what there was to love in flowers and children and cottages and country lanes. But he knew how the simplest things may awaken 'thoughts too deep for tears.' The deepest soul that ever lived saw parables of God in the humble scenery of his father's village—in the corn, the birds, the mustard-seed, the vine and fig tree, the sheep and goats, the sunshine and the stormy sky. 'Consider,' he said, 'the lilies of the field, how they grow ; they toil not, neither do they spin, and yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his

glory was not arrayed like one of these.' Deep calleth unto deep. So it is with human life. The solemn voices of human pain and effort and righteousness call to the depths in us. The cry of the Armenians, the cries of the poor in our great cities, the cries of the modern world for belief in God's love, are some of the calls to depths in us, which too often find only *shallows*. There are star-depths and soul-depths. The very fact that we live is a call to thoughtful men and women. What is it to *be* ? Why am I ? Duty is another call. How is it that conscience makes us stronger than ourselves or weaker than children ? Love and lastly Death and the Judgment are summonses to the deep in us. We are surrounded by the voices of the great Deep. In us and about us is the Unfathomable. Let us listen for the solemn voices which speak to us every day from the Unseen.

PSALM LI.

Scholars tell us that this noble hymn (excepting the last verses, 18, 19, an addition by a priest who disapproved of the absence of ritual, implied by verses 16, 17), was the work of a poet who wrote in the name of the 'Servant of Iahveh,' the sorrowful and God-fearing portion of the Hebrews in Babylonia who tried to keep the rest of the exiles true to their religion. Isaiah of Babylon put many of his prophecies into the mouth of this 'Servant,' or into the mouth of God as speaking to him. See especi-

ally *Is.* xlii.-xlv. 7, xlix., lix., lx.-lxiv. As a Hebrew poem, then, this psalm expresses a national or rather Church repentance and cry for forgiveness. Israel has sinned from his birth (5), and has been punished by exile (8, 11); but his sin has been only against God (4), not against the wicked nations round, and he confesses his transgressions, he feels that he has deserved the woes he has suffered. He would be clean and true inwardly, and by his newness of life and his love of God, would be a light to the heathen, and a means of bringing them to acknowledge their Maker.

But in Christendom the psalm has been intensely *personal*. It has uttered the sorrow and shame of tens of thousands of individual Christians for their secret sins. It has long been known from its beginning in the Greek as the *Kyrie Eleison*, or in Latin the *Miserere*, and it is the greatest of the 'Penitential Psalms.' Nowhere is the sense of sin and of the need of God's mercy stronger. The defiled soul would be washed and cleansed from iniquity (1, 2, 7, 9, 10). Its remembrance is bitter and continual (3). And it is not only visible but secret wickedness (6). Only inward righteousness and purity and truth can now satisfy. Appearance and make-belief have no longer any attraction. The soul wants goodness for its own sake, and seeks it of God. It is undeserved (9), but God is merciful. He will not cast the sinner from his presence nor withdraw his holy Spirit from man's heart (11). If God will

grant the prayer, and continue his favour, and give the new life, then out of sin shall spring up an earnest activity for the good of evil-doers (13). Many sinners have proved the good workers and missionaries, men who have gone down into the depths of sin, and, then, hating themselves, have done their utmost to make atonement for it. St. Peter, Mary Magdalene, Jacob, Augustine, Bunyan, are a few instances. Then after penitence and inward renewal, and atoning work, shall come again joy and praise in the sanctuary (14, 15). The sacrifices of a broken and a contrite heart, not of burnt offerings, are the means of Divine acceptance and gladness in the heart.

Dante loved this psalm and made it more sacred to us by his love. He had it sung by souls in Purgatory, and has it in mind at the throne of God in Paradise. Another great Florentine, Savonarola, repeated it in his torture, and our own Sir Thomas More and Lady Jane Grey spoke it on the scaffold. When the late Dr. Arnold knew that he was dying he asked for the fifty-first psalm (Marson: *The Psalms at Work*, p. 77).

PSALM CXXXVII.

This sad and passionate little poem was evidently written after the Captivity in Babylonia, when the memory of it was fresh and fierce. The poet recalls how the exiles sat down together in the flat, well-watered plain of Babylonia, so different from the hill country

of Israel, and wept when they remembered, or the elder ones told, of Zion. They could not sing. They hanged up their harps useless on the willows. When the heathen strangers asked them to sing, they refused. 'Come,' they said, 'sing us one of your Zion songs.' But how could they sing a psalm in the hated land of bondage? Their hearts were fixed on Jerusalem and the Temple. If they ever forgot their own land and its worship, might their right hand forget how to play the harp, and their tongue cleave to the roof of their mouth! Then the singer utters his hatred against his kinsmen, the Edomites, the sons of Esau, who, in the day of Jerusalem's fall (B.C. 586), took the side of the enemy and cruelly assisted them. This is told in the prophecy of Obadiah, from which we learn that the Edomites not only rejoiced in the sack of the city, but cut off the fugitives who tried to escape by the by-roads. Obadiah's thirst for revenge is that of the psalmist: 'As thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee; thy dealing shall return upon thine own head' (15). The climax of the poem, however, is reserved for the detested Babylonians themselves, whose city has just been taken by Cyrus (B.C. 538):—

'O daughter of Babylon, that art taken
by storm,
Happy shall he be that rewardeth thee
As thou hast served us!
Happy shall he be that taketh and dash-
eth thy little ones
Against the stones!'

This outburst of vengeance is natu-

ral enough under the circumstances. Everyone who has realised the situation of the writer can sympathise with it. But if natural it is unspiritual and horrible. It is utterly strange to Christianity. Let us turn to the Sermon on the Mount (*Matt. v.*) and to Christ's words of forgiveness on the cross (*Luke xxiii. 26-49*).

PSALM CXXXIX.

I now come to the most wonderful poem in the Psalter. I have spoken of it as marred by a reference towards the close to hated heathen enemies, but in spite of this defect it is unequalled. The writer is greatly inspired by a sense of God's presence in the universe, and above all in the soul of man. God is a searching Spirit that knows us in our daily doings—our rising-up, our down-sitting, our words, our thoughts, our lying down. We are never alone, because God is always with us, and, what is far more, *in touch with us*. We live *in contact* with the Divine and Eternal. The human understanding cannot grasp such a mystery, but our spirit feels it. Wherever, then, we go, or whatever becomes of us, God is with us and touches us still, in the skies or in the grave. There are boundless possibilities in his presence and *keeping*. But meanwhile, let us feel this searching knowledge of God. Let it try us and know us, and tell us of every evil. Only the truth can permanently satisfy us, and help us into the way everlasting.

EDGAR I. FRIPP.

Teachers in Council

Reward-giving in Sunday Schools.

THE for and against this practice has been more than once the subject of discussion, and has been treated of in our magazines and papers; but the question is by no means authoritatively settled, and probably never will be.

There are two strong arguments brought forward by the opponents of these yearly distributions; first, that it is setting a low ideal, or aim, before the children. Regular attendance and good conduct should not be encouraged by means of what is tantamount to a bribe, it is said. Secondly, the liability of the system being abused by unfairness, real or apparent, is brought forward. There is a third reason, a minor one, and that is the cost of the reward books.

My reply to the first and main objection would be to admit at once that, in offering a reward for goodness, the highest ideal to strive after is not put forward. But are children, and indeed are we ourselves, quite able to shut our eyes to a tangible reward for

good conduct? It is a pathway to follow, but the end is still to be reached. Punctuality, regularity, good behaviour, even with view to a reward at the end of a year, are good habits to get into, and will surely have an influence on the children in after life.

As regards the abuse of the system and its cost in carrying out, I can leave these objections to be met by others, simply putting down here my reasons for supporting the custom.

Rewards are friendly tokens or gifts in acknowledgment of the children's good conduct and regular attendance. They are a sort of certificate which may be useful to scholars in search of a situation, and as the books are usually carefully chosen, they supply healthy reading, helping to form the taste in choice of literature.

Further, Reward-giving renders the school attractive, making a bright feature at the annual gathering of teachers, children and their parents; and lastly, they are a help to discipline, as the withholding of marks necessary to obtain a prize takes the place of punishment.

AN OLD TEACHER.

II.

I have been asked to contribute a paper upon the question of Prizes in our Sunday Schools. Although not a Sunday school teacher at the present time, I write with an experience of some fourteen or fifteen years as teacher in two of our Sunday schools, and I have had an opportunity of judging of the effect of the two systems, Prize-giving and Non-Prize-giving, upon teachers and scholars, as I have taught in the same schools under both. My verdict is, without hesitation, against prizes, and I would fain win over some of my opponents to my side if possible, by showing how the system of Prize-giving brings out and fosters the lower passions and feelings which it is the work of the Sunday school to subdue and conquer.

When we offer a child a prize for anything, the first thing to be sure of is, that that prize will be a help to the child towards obtaining the thing it is striving for. In Board schools and Public schools, prizes are excellent when given as rewards for knowledge acquired by irksome and arduous application on the part of the scholars. They act as an incentive and spur, and with the prize in view the scholar will put out all the power of his mind. The prize, when won, is a guarantee of a certain standard of excellence in arithmetic, mathematics, Latin, Greek, or whatever the subject may be. The prize has helped the scholar to attain

what we wished him to attain when we offered it. Now I want to show that this is not the case in the Sunday school; that there, the prize, instead of being a help, is often a hindrance. We wish to teach our children first of all to be honest, upright, just, truthful—what we may call elementary morality—afterwards we rise to higher things. Do our prizes help them? I say ‘No.’ In most of our schools prizes are given for two things, viz., punctual, regular attendance, and good conduct. I do not consider that the first *in itself* is a good thing; there is no merit in a child attending school fifty-two times, if it is just as rude and unruly at the end of the time as at the beginning. I have known the most troublesome children to be regular and punctual, never missing a Sunday; they have carried off the prizes year after year, and Sunday after Sunday have turned their class into a bear-garden. In all our schools we have the same evil, I think; unpunctual and irregular teachers. Now I ask, why should punctual and regular attendance be such a virtue in the scholars that the teachers offer a prize for it, and yet this virtue is entirely neglected by themselves? Would it not strike a sharp scholar as inconsistent, to say the least of it.

In some schools the mark for attendance depends upon good conduct, and can be withheld by the teacher. This sounds well, and would be so, if there were one standard of good conduct throughout the school; but this

is not so, and can never be where the teachers are of all ages and different ranks of life. At one end of the scale is the quiet, elderly lady with strict ideas as to the correct and proper behaviour of poor children; at the other end the young teacher of fifteen or sixteen years, scarce older than the scholars he is set to teach, and to whom their pranks and mischief are only 'a bit of fun.' These classes may be side by side. The boys scrimmage, fight, eat apples, etc., while a story book is read, and in the end receive their marks for 'good conduct,' the lad or girl teacher being either too sympathetic or too afraid of being unpopular, to withhold them. In the other class, a child looks round, attracted by the noise and excitement, loses her place in the reading-book, or fails to answer a question put to her. She is promptly pounced upon by the strict lady before-mentioned, and loses her good conduct mark. The difference between justice as portrayed in the lesson, and justice as carried out in the school, may perhaps puzzle the child's mind. The boys exult at having 'done' the teachers, and feel no shame when, at the end of the year, they receive the prizes with inscriptions that they are awarded for 'good conduct.' Many a time have I heard parents express surprise that So-and-So always gets a prize at Sunday school, as he or she is the worst and most troublesome boy or girl at home. I maintain also that prizes lead to direct dishonesty on the

part of the scholars. In some schools a class register is used by the teacher to mark the attendance, in others the names are called by the superintendent. The registers lie on the desk, and I have known scholars to alter the marks, or in the absence of the teacher to mark themselves 'early' when it should have been 'late.' In these cases the prizes have acted as a direct temptation to dishonesty and deceit. The prize won in this way will go far to counteract the lesson on 'Honesty is the best policy.' I go still further and say that prizes are a stumbling-block, and rock of offence even to the teachers and superintendent. Is not the teacher (even the conscientious one) inclined to be more lenient with the scholar who has almost made up the number of attendances to entitle him to a prize and who will thereby reflect credit upon his class? An extreme case of this kind came under my notice; a model child in the school who had made up its attendances and behaved well throughout the year, was found to have stolen something from a playmate while in the school; the teachers were divided upon the question of withholding the prize; the majority were in favour of granting it, and the farce was gone through of a child receiving a prize for 'good-conduct,' whom teachers, scholars, and parents knew had been guilty of theft! Does not the superintendent delay opening school five minutes or so because So-and-So, who is always in time, happens

to be a little late and would thereby run the risk of losing the prize?

Again. I have always grieved over the good children, those who have tried for a prize steadily and well throughout the year, and then, just at the last, something prevents their attendance. Illness at home, or trouble of some kind. They come to you with piteous faces—‘Can I not have it, teacher?’ ‘I would not go to the country holidays so as not to lose the prize’; ‘it was not my fault, it was mother who wanted me at home,’ etc., etc. The teacher has to go against all his teaching in withholding it. The child has been persevering, behaved well, sacrificed pleasure, obeyed the call of duty, all which things deserve a Sunday school prize, if any do, and yet the prize is withheld, and must be.

I do not much wonder that the officers in our schools are in favour of prizes; they have to think of the welfare of the school as a whole, and they judge, more or less, by numbers and outward results. In a school in which I have been teacher the course of affairs has been something like this: The school is at a low ebb, the number of scholars has gradually gone down; the superintendent, secretary, etc., are in despair—‘What is to be done?’ ‘It will not do to go on like this’; ‘Something must be done to raise the numbers’; and the fatal idea of prizes is started, fatal I mean to the teacher who cares nought for numbers or outward results, but only for the

individual children under his care; how he can instil into them principles which will help them to defy and overcome the temptations which will beset them in after life?

To conclude, make up your mind what you are working for. Do you want your school to be flourishing? Do you want friends to congratulate you on your success? Do you want, perhaps, to see a paragraph in ‘The Inquirer’ or ‘Christian Life’ stating that the number of your scholars is high, and the prizes awarded numerous? If this will satisfy you, then have prizes by all means. They will bring you all this.

But if you are philosophical enough not to care about outside opinion, if you are contented with a small thing provided it be sound and good, if you wish your scholars to be upright, honourable, and just, then, I say, do without prizes. The scholars will not come in crowds; but those who do come will retain in after life a feeling of love and respect for their teachers and for the old school where they learnt lessons which meet with no earthly reward.

E. F. G.

III.

The foregoing letter is a most earnest protest against what the writer evidently regards as a great evil. He has forcibly described the *abuse* of the practice of reward-giving, and if the conditions and results he so graphically defines obtained in all our

schools he might, perhaps, carry to the same conclusion the majority of our teachers. It must indeed be difficult to wisely conduct a class that is allowed to become a 'bear garden,' where 'the boys scrimmage, fight, eat apples, etc.,' 'and in the end receive their marks for good conduct'! I can well imagine, where such scenes are tolerated, the anxious and perhaps inexperienced teacher may constantly dangle the material reward the school offers before the eyes of his pupils, until they come to regard the 'prize' as the one object of their attendance. But is it possible for a child to attend any of our Sunday schools fifty-two times in the year and yet to be 'just as rude and unruly at the end of the time as at the beginning'? If it is, I deny it is an argument against giving rewards to those children who have deserved them, but it would be an unanswerable argument in favour of expelling an incorrigible child, or closing a useless school. If 'order is heaven's first law,' it should also be the first law of the Sunday school; that obtained, a part of E. F. G.'s objection to reward-giving must, I imagine, disappear.

'An old teacher' says 'rewards are friendly tokens in acknowledgment of the children's good conduct and regular attendance.' This statement I heartily endorse. Prizes are *not* the end of school attendance, but merely incidental thereto. One might put the case thus: believing that punctuality is a desirable habit to acquire, and, that no effective teaching can be carried on unless the

children are orderly and attentive, the teachers keep a record of the conduct of the scholars. If good marks are obtained it shows the children have conformed to the rules and tried to gain some benefit from their teachers; and the school managers testify to the gratification they feel at this result, by presenting, to each scholar with a good record, a reward. When sickness or other unforeseen cause has interfered with a child's regular attendance, and the minimum number of marks entitling to a prize has not been earned, *because* of this enforced and temporary absence, the prize should *not* be withheld, but the exceptional circumstances should be publicly explained in the school and thus any suspicion of favouritism will be avoided.

I cannot agree with the suggestion that to give a prize is necessarily to bribe. It is a 'tangible reward,' but as tangible rewards frequently follow from right-doing, in rewarding our scholars we are but following an eternal law. Honesty has been referred to; look for a moment at the consequence of the practice of honesty. Every true man is honest, *not* because it is the 'best policy,' but because he desires to be true to a high ideal. But does not material advantage often follow from its practice? Every business man knows that honest dealing compels the confidence of his clients and consequently increases his business; it *is* the best policy. He cannot, even if he would, divest himself of this advantage, —the direct consequence of right-doing.

A bribe is 'something given to corrupt the conduct'; whereas the prizes offered in our Sunday schools are intended to stimulate the desire for that which the child early learns to understand as good conduct.

It has been said that rewards are given in order to induce new scholars to attend and so enlarge the school. I have never known this done; indeed, during the thirty years I have been connected with Sunday school work, this is the first time I have heard the suggestion.

Rewards are given to the scholars not only to urge them to do what their teachers approve but also to give them pleasure.

Is there an argument used against reward-giving that may not with equal force be urged against country excursions, Christmas-tree entertainments, visits to an art gallery or any other means adopted to add to the pleasure of the young people in our schools? I think not.

Surely we all work in the Sunday school hoping we may help our children to become 'upright, honourable, and just.' Whether we are in favour of or against reward-giving, that is the grand object we have in view. This task calls for the utmost wisdom which the Sunday school teacher possesses, but let no means be neglected of making the school life of the child bright and happy. Let us seek to fill the memories of these young people with wise precepts and to cultivate in them good habits, but do *not*

let us fail to increase, so far as lies in our power, the number of innocent pleasures that otherwise may never enter into their lives.

W. B. HOLMES.

Poem for the Children.

WHAT THE SPARROW CHIRPS.

I am only a little Sparrow,
A bird of low degree,
My life is of little value,
But the dear Lord cares for me.

He gives me a coat of feathers,
It is very plain I know;
Without a speck of crimson,
For it was not made for show.
But it keeps me warm in Winter,
And shields me from the rain;
Were it bordered with gold and purple,
Perhaps it might make me vain.

And now that the Spring-time cometh,
I will build me a little nest;
With many a chirp of pleasure,
In the spot I like the best.

I have no barn, or store-house,
I neither sow nor reap;
God gives me a Sparrow's portion,
And never a seed to keep.

If my meat is sometimes scanty,
Close pecking makes it sweet;
I have always enough to feed me,
And life is more than meat.

I know there are many Sparrows;
All over the world they are found;
But our Heavenly Father knoweth,
When one of us falls to the ground.

Though small, we are never forgotten,
Though weak, we are never afraid;
For we know that the dear Lord keepeth,
The life of the creatures He made.

I fly through the thickest forest,
 I alight on many a spray;
 I have no chart, or compass,
 But I never lose my way.
 I just fold my wings at twilight,
 Wherever I happen to be;
 For the Father is always watching,
 And no harm will come to me.
 I am only a little Sparrow,
 A bird of low degree;
 But I know the Father loves me;
 Dost thou know His love for thee?
 —Selected.

A Lesson from the Sermon on the Mount.

AND HOW THE TEACHER GAVE IT.

‘**W**HAT the children want,’ said an enthusiastic teacher to me, ‘is to have something lively, something to keep up their interest. I always begin with a bait, as I call it, to wake them up; then, when the children’s eyes and ears are well open, I pass on to the substance of my lesson, and when *that* has been drilled into them, I finish up with a story illustrating what has been taught.’

‘That is capital,’ I replied; ‘but it means a lot of trouble, doesn’t it?’

My friend gave me a queer look as he said, ‘A thing is usually worth what it costs, isn’t it? If our lesson is to be worth anything, then, we ought to be willing to pay something for it. Why, if we take any interest in the scholars and want to help our

boys and girls to lead real, true lives, we *must* think how we can best drive home the lessons that will help them. Now next Sunday I am going to give them the first sixteen verses of *Matt v.*—the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount, you know.’

‘I wish I could be one of the class,’ said I.

The teacher looked uncertain. ‘It doesn’t always do,’ said he, ‘to have a visitor in the class. However, I think it might be managed. If you go into the gallery you can look down on the pew where I hold my class, and then you can quietly hear all that goes on. But I’m rather afraid you will be shocked, for I just use the words that come first, and think more about the lesson than the language, perhaps. —Anyhow, you’re welcome to come if you think I can help you.’

So it was arranged, and the next Sunday found me quietly ensconced in the gallery when the class took its place in the pew below. The lesson was so successful in awakening and sustaining the interest of the children, that I jotted down the words as they came from the lips of the teacher. The boys began by wondering what their teacher was talking about, and then went on listening, in order that they might find out.

MR. A. H. BIGGS’ LESSON.

‘Now I wonder what *you* would have done. I don’t think *you* would have liked it any more than *I* did. It was not comfortable, I can tell you, and it

was very dark; so dark that you could not see where to go, and people were always running into you from all sides, not seeing that you were there. Oh, you would not have liked it, certainly not; and I was glad to get out of it as soon as possible. What was it? Oh, the gas went out suddenly in the gas-lamps in the middle of the crossing, and of course all the carts and cabs and omnibuses coming from four directions at once ran into one another in the dark, and nearly ran over a number of people who were in the road. And it isn't the most comfortable thing in the world to be in the middle of four cross-roads in absolute darkness, with horses on all sides of you backing and rearing, and not a chance of getting across to the other side without being run over. But it was all right again as soon as the gas was relit.

'You see our life is like that gas-lamp. If we don't shine brightly, as we were meant to shine by being Christians, being as much like Christ as we can, we are sure to make a great many people unhappy. When the gas goes out and the tap is not turned off, the gas is there all the time, though you cannot see it. You can hear it escaping, and, if you bring a light to it, it will burn just as brightly as ever. The good stuff is there all the time, but it is no use unless it is lit. Your heart is full of good stuff, good thoughts and intentions; but what a lot of good your life would miss if there was never the light of Christianity to make it burn for the good of others!'

[Having now got the children's attention, the teacher passed on to the substance.]

'Well, I have a form here on this big piece of paper, which is rather like a puzzle, but unlike some puzzles, it can be found out. A friend told me the other day that I could never get my class to patiently fill it in. I said I could. He was sure I could not. I told him he did not know what my class could do. Let us show him.'

[Here he produced the following form written large on a sheet of paper or card, so that all could see it; and the same form on a slip of paper was given to each child.]

SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

(*St. Matthew*, chap. v. 1-16).

	Found in verse
To the { M	5
{ P	3
{ M	4
{ P	10
Teaching { 1	6
{ 2	7
{ 3	8
Ye are the L	
i	
g	14-16
h	
t	

'This was a lesson to the disciples,—those who were learning to be like Jesus; we are trying to do that, so it is a lesson to us. Now let us turn to Matthew's Gospel, the 5th chapter, and read the first sixteen verses.

'Look at the "Blesseds." There are four which show the kind of people Jesus was teaching, you can find them easily, they begin either with M or P. They are the Meek, the Poor in Spirit, the Mourners, and the Persecuted. Write them in the spaces on your form just as I do on this one.'

[He then filled in the first four spaces.]

'Three other "Blesseds" show the lessons Jesus wanted his disciples to learn. They are in verses 6, 7, and 8.

'When you are hungry you want some food very badly, you must have it or starve.

'Righteousness means being right oneself, and doing right, that is, being good and doing good. And to be hungry for that, means that you feel you *must* be good and *do* good, as Jesus did. When you are hungry you *do* something to get some food; when you want to be good or do good you *do* something—you make up your mind, *you will to be good*.

'The first lesson then is "Will to be good." Write it on your form.

'An omnibus would never get up a hill but for the horses; and we shall never get our lives up to anything like perfection except with "Will-to-be-good"; he's the horse.

'The second lesson is "Be merciful." Merciful means mercy-full, full of mercy. Sisters of mercy are people who go about doing kind things and saying kind words to poor people who are ill or troubled. They are doing deeds of love all the time. If you saw

a little child all alone in a crowd and lost, crying, you would try to comfort it; you would be full of mercy, pity, love for it. A boy would never stand by and see a little fellow bullied unmercifully by a big chap; he would interfere and rescue him. That would be a merciful act, a loving act. So "merciful" means "full of love," and Jesus' second lesson therefore was "Love." Write that on your forms.

'The third lesson is "Be pure in heart." You don't drink dirty water I hope, it would give you fever. Fancy drinking water full of tadpoles. I wouldn't. Pure water is clean water, water with all the bad things taken out, water you can see through. Pure hearts are clean hearts, which have no bad in them, and which God can see through. They are true. The third lesson, then, is "Be True-hearted." Write it down on your form.

'I would not think much of a man, would you, who offered me a ticket for a school treat, if I gave him sixpence; and then when I paid the sixpence and went for the treat, there was none. That man would be acting a lie though perhaps he did not tell one. He would not be true-hearted. Jesus was.

'I would not think much of a man who laid gas pipes on in my house and charged me for gas, and when I wanted to light my gas nothing came out of the tube but air. I should not be able to see anything at night, because I had no gas. I should have the tubes, but no gas, and the gas man would be a cheat when he took my money. You

see, what isn't in the tubes can't come out. And if the true heart is not in you, no good thing can come out. To make our lives useful, like guiding gas-lamps to others, we must have the good stuff in us, and light it with our strong "will to be good." Jesus says in verse 14 "Ye are the light of the world,"—and, later on, in verse 16, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

"If our light goes out, what a lot of harm comes to other people! If we do bad deeds and say bad things, what a lot of harm we do to others who are walking along life's road by our light! It is just like the man on the tug boat. What? Never heard the story? Oh, then listen. This is the story of Josh.

'You have seen barges. They carry goods down the river to the warehouses; and usually, if it is near night-time, a number of them are tied on to a tug, and away they go to their destination. Wherever the tug goes they are bound to go, and if the tug goes to the bottom of the river, they have to go there too, unless they can get loose in time, and of course then their barges are drowned.

'Well, one evening, Josh and his tug took a number of these barges in tow, and steamed away towards London Bridge. Just as it was getting dark, one of the barges clambered out on to the bow of his barge and shouted to Josh to know if it was all right for him to go to sleep. Said he, "Josh?"

"Aye, aye," replied Josh. He was steering the tug.

"Have you got your lamps alight, mate? If so, I'll turn in."

"Oh, aye," replied Josh, meaning to see to his lights in a minute. The barges all went to sleep, thinking it was safe. And so it would have been if the lights on the tug had been burning. They were not, and Josh forgot all about them. In the middle of the river they suddenly met a big steamer coming slowly up stream. The stranger did not see them, though her captain could hear the tug, puffing fussily somewhere in the darkness. The next moment there was a collision. Josh and the barges were plunged into the Thames. The steamer put out boats, and after a struggle managed to save all the men; but the tug and the barges, and their precious cargoes, went to the bottom of the river.

'If you are like Josh, and set a bad example, and don't keep your light burning bravely for Love and True-heartedness, you will bring others to their ruin, because they are following you and cannot get loose in time. You see the last part of this form. Let us fill it up, so that we can remember how we are to let our light shine brightly to help other people in the world.

"Ye are the Light of the world," said Jesus,—and we can be so if we remember—

Love
I
Give.
Heart
True.

‘Put that on your forms, and don’t forget to shine brightly.’

* * * * *

This brought the lesson to a close. Not quite, though; for each boy was given a little penny note book to carry away with him, and into this the contents of the slip of paper were to be copied during the week.

The school then assembled for the closing service; and finally with a warm handshake from the teacher and a bright ‘good-bye,’ the children hurried home to tea, while I went up to my friend to give him hearty thanks for the lesson he had given to me as well as to his scholars that afternoon.

The Superintendent.



THE position of the Superintendent is one of great opportunity, and of responsibilities as great. It gives an exceptional influence, and it requires exceptional vigilance. In order to indicate its special scope, I re-state here two principles which I have dealt with at some length elsewhere.¹

1. The Superintendent has the final responsibility for the order of the whole school, both when the classes are assembled together, and when they are at work separately.

¹ Chapter vii. of ‘Practical Hints for Sunday School Teachers.’

2. In order that this responsibility may be fully met, there should be a definite understanding and co-operation between superintendent and teacher.

I confine myself in this article to two or three additional notes and suggestions on these points.

I.—SUPERINTENDENT AND ELDER SCHOLARS. *The elder scholars are much more likely to remain in a school where good order is kept than in one which is disorderly.* Is this aspect of the elder scholars question sufficiently kept in view, and do superintendents realize its importance? The reasons why elder scholars do not remain, and the means of getting them to remain, are frequently discussed. I think a reason too little noticed is this—that where order is not kept, or is not kept without fuss and friction, elder scholars are constantly made to feel that they are *still amongst school children*. In such a case the first thing to do, towards retaining them, is *to bring dignity into the school proceedings*.

We all know that the sense of dignity is a marked characteristic of the young person who has just emerged from childhood. According to the treatment he receives, this sentiment becomes an ugly self-conceit which separates, or a wholesome self-respect which unites. It is at first a delicate flower upon a strong plant, and much depends upon the conditions under which it grows.

To maintain such a tone in the school that young men and women shall feel that they are not out of place

with little children, should be amongst the chief aims of the superintendent: it is an aim which lies specially in his sphere. This is achieved, not by laxity, but by a sway which is natural and easy because firm and wise,—by a discipline which does not irritate and annoy, because it is unnoticed and regarded as a matter of course.

If elder scholars are employed now and then in helping to manage the younger ones, they the more readily see things from the teachers' point of view, and make allowance for inevitable intrusions of discipline which might otherwise chafe them. As they grow older they should be brought to see that by being in the school they may not only serve their own interest, but may also contribute, at least indirectly by example, to the training of others. For this reason it is well, if possible, to avoid the total separation of elder classes from the rest of the school—a plan sometimes adopted for the special purpose of maintaining their dignity. This alternative will rarely be necessary if there is a good tone in the school.

II.—SUPERINTENDENT AND TEACHERS.
When the whole school is assembled in one body, there should be unity of aim and action; therefore all initiative should come from the Superintendent.

A school in general assembly should be like a ship when the captain is on the bridge, and officers and crew are ready to carry out his instructions. If each officer tried to direct his own subordinates independently of the captain, however skilful the officers might

be there would be confusion. Their plans and methods would certainly differ, and would clash with and neutralise each other.

A single purpose and will should guide the actions of all, and the officers should be foremost in regarding it. In a school the superintendent is the captain, the teachers are the officers. If the superintendent fulfils his part properly, the teachers' sole care should be to keep their classes up to his understood or expressed requirements. A teacher should not be inattentive either to the superintendent or to his class. A superintendent should take care that teachers have from him all the initiative they require.

III.—DIFFICULT CHILDREN. *Teachers and Superintendent should work systematically together in dealing with difficult children.*¹

The resources of discipline, which are available in the Sunday school, are more limited than in the day school, and this is one reason why many Sunday teachers resign themselves to a much lower standard of behaviour. But is there no other alternative? If so, the high aims of the Sunday school are destined to be perpetually defeated, and its claims must be abated. For if it cannot teach gentleness, courtesy and thoughtfulness for others (the roots of all voluntary social order), no one will believe that it can exercise any real moral and religious influence. But this is not the only alternative.

¹ See also 'Practical Hints, etc. chapter vii., last section.

There is nothing in the conditions of Sunday school work to justify the teacher in resigning himself to ill-behaviour in his class. What we need is to recognise the difference between Sunday school and day school, and to use methods which correspond to this difference.

The special characteristic of the Sunday school is that it is a voluntary institution—the bond between teachers and scholars is ultimately one of goodwill alone. Even if the home influence which sends a child to school be compulsion, there must be something quite different *within* the school to *keep* him there, especially as a happy and orderly inmate. Let us recognise this fully. But what does it imply? Surely not that teachers should allow scholars to do what they like, but that they should get their scholars to like doing what they ought to do; not that scholars should be expected to do nothing but what they would do voluntarily, but that they should be taught what a voluntary relation between teacher and scholar requires of them; not that scholars should get the impression that where ordinary compulsion is relaxed then ill-behaviour is permissible, but that they should be taught to behave well under the sense of a higher compulsion—that of duty, affection and respect.

What methods fulfil these conditions? I suggest the following as worthy of special attention.

(1) Do not attempt to disguise from the scholar the difference between the

Sunday school and the day school. On the contrary, never allow them to forget that the relation between teacher and scholar is entirely voluntary, and that you have no wish (and, in the end, no power) to exercise the same kind of authority as that which belongs to the day school teacher.

(2) Make it equally clear that you must have behaviour not less attentive, orderly and courteous—nay, that it should be more so, if possible, from the very fact that your relation with your scholars is voluntary—since only by such behaviour can the object of your meeting together be fulfilled, and it is to their own interest more than to yours that it should be fulfilled.

(3) Any scholar who disturbs a class should be made to realise that the above are the conditions of happiness in Sunday school, by being promptly deprived of the privileges of class-fellowship. Dismissal from class is the one natural and effective penalty for disorder in Sunday school. It makes real to the scholar, by a visible separation, the fact of moral separation which he has himself brought about. It throws upon him precisely the pain and loss which he would inflict upon others, and which is most repugnant to him. 'The punishment fits the crime.'

(4) The above policy should be definitely agreed upon between superintendent and teachers, and there should be no reluctance on the part of either to co-operate in it. It is capable of considerable variation or adaptation.

The teacher may send a scholar to the superintendent for a specified time, say five or ten minutes, if the disorderly mood is likely soon to pass off. Or the superintendent may be left to act according to his own judgment. He will do well to get from the scholar himself (if possible) a full statement of the reason for his dismissal. In any case he can have a little quiet talk with him in a manner impossible to the teacher in the midst of a lesson. Sometimes, by getting a promise of good behaviour from the offender, and asking the teacher after an interval to take him back as a favour, he will make his influence peculiarly effective. The teacher's position is strengthened, not weakened, by such intervention, if it is used with discrimination. The superintendent must make it quite clear that he is not reversing anything the teacher has done. He should definitely ask the teacher before the whole class whether he will receive the scholar back, on the ground that he has changed his mood and means to do better. Under such circumstances nothing is so winning as clemency—nothing is so likely to increase respect for the firmness previously exercised.

Such methods as these have a three-fold advantage—they avoid that friction which is such a hindrance to class-teaching, they enable the superintendent to get to know well the more difficult scholars in the school, they enable him to support the teachers in dealing with them.

H. RAWLINGS.

Illustrative Anecdote.

'It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.'

I.



TWO travellers were riding across the ice and snow-covered plains in Siberia. The cold was intense, and as evening approached, both riders began to feel in feet and hands the numbing sensation of frost. Could they hold out long enough to be able to reach their destination for the night? The weaker of the two at last was unable to keep his seat and, after making a few desperate efforts to do so, he slipped from the saddle and rolled on to the ground. His companion was almost in the same plight. He stayed his horse for a moment, hesitating as to whether he should try to save his own life by using what little strength remained to reach the nearest village. No, he could not leave his friend. He dismounted and set to work, as well as his own frozen limbs would allow, to restore life to his comrade by rubbing his arms, hands and feet. Gradually the blood circulation was restored; little by little the fallen man recovered, and was able to re-mount his horse. The painful exertion which had been necessary to bring back the weaker comrade to life had so acted upon the bodily frame of the other that he too had lost the deadening effect of the cold. Both friends were thus able to continue their ride and to reach shelter before nightfall.

Fifty-two Lesson Notes on Bible Readings.

FOR ADULT CLASSES.

THE object of these Readings is to point out the salient features of that great religious movement, which may be called Hebrew and Christian Messianism. The developed Mosaism of the time of Jesus was a religion of humble origin. Its absolute Monotheism appears to have been reached, hardly before, probably during the Jewish exile. Within this religion arose the conception of a society which should both express the Monotheistic idea and become an organized embodiment of those social forces naturally arising out of the idea of one universal God. At first its presentment took a political form, mentally localized at Jerusalem and including only the Jewish people, yet having a kindly outlook towards the Gentile world. In late pre-Christian times, this society was known as 'The Kingdom of God'—or—'of Heaven.' Christianity was a wider and more spiritual interpretation of this ideal, setting aside all limitations of race and locality: it was, in fact, 'The opening of the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers.'

It must not, however, be supposed that the Bible was written to shew that development which these readings are intended to illustrate. Had one mind planned and composed the whole book, it might have taken the form of

a history in which development and continuity should have been prominent motives. In this case, the varied conceptions of God, contrary ethical ideas and multiform religious practice, would have found a fitting subordination to the one ideal of the single writer. Instead of which, we have the works of many minds and widely separate times, which, with more or less of adjustment, have been compiled for the necessities of Jewish and Christian service. It is this adjustment of various material that makes the Bible one, in spite of the diversity of its literary treasures. And as Messianism in its successive phases is the vital idea both of Mosaism and Christianity, such unity as the Bible exhibits is due to the common necessity of both Churches to find some literary embodiment of those ideas for which each stands.

This kind of unity I have endeavoured to make apparent. But to keep these readings within the limits of a single year's study many important links have been necessarily omitted. I trust, however, it will not be difficult for the teacher of even moderate leisure to fill in, by a somewhat wider reading, the most important of the inevitable gaps.

I.

Read *Genesis i.*

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth: and God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good.'

H

This beautiful and poetic introduction to the Bible was written by some member of the priestly community of Babylon or Jerusalem during the Persian rule. Its evident intention is to declare that all things are of God, and that at first all things were good. The books in which the great religious movement of the Hebrews found expression were appointed to be publicly read in the synagogues throughout the country districts as well as at Jerusalem, and it was a most fitting prelude to start with the thought of God as the Great Spiritual Source of all that exists. This chapter is not in any sense to be regarded as science. Only mental trouble can arise from so regarding it. Confusion waits on him who shall seek to force these words to speak scientific truth, or shall compel science to find its discoveries anticipated here. It probably represents what the learned Jews of the Persian period believed of the method and order of creation. But its importance lies not in this; it lies in the fact that it strikes the keynote to the whole purpose and intent of the Bible. God—than whom none other exists—is the mighty source of all that is.

II.

Read *Genesis* iii. 1-6, 17-24.

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—‘Behold the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil.’

All things were thought to have been perfectly good at first. But no one can look on the world with any degree of thought, without feeling that something is amiss. These stories of Eden and the Fall of Man are wholly legendary, and belong to the very childhood of Hebrew religious thought. They are derived from a book written about the ninth century B.C., but reflect probably much older speculation. In any case they reflect the long troubled guessing at the causes of evils everywhere manifest. It was somehow felt that evil

was bound up with sin and disobedience to God. The most and worst of this is most undoubtedly so, but it does not account for all. Death, pain, sorrow, labour, enmities of beasts and enmities of men are too natural and common to be ascribed to a single act of disobedience of our original parents, and especially a case of gentle innocence deceived. If ever the cause shall be seen by man we may be sure that it will reveal a just and merciful God, though man has never rested long with any explanation of the great enigma. Still, the instinct is right which impels men to the constantly recurring inquiry as to what is amiss, though the guesses of to-day may be as wide of the mark as those of the ancients.

III.

Read *Genesis* ix. 1-17.

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—‘I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth.’

We are still in the domain of legend, but the selection of the stories is strictly within the purpose of the compilers of the Bible. In themselves they may have one meaning, but the meaning of their selection is another.

1. The story of Cain and Abel appears to represent the conflict of the agriculturalist and the pastoral nomad, but it is selected to shew the progress of evil.

2. The story of the Flood is common to many peoples, and probably represents some notable and destructive event in the Tigris and Euphrates valley. Its selection here is due to the supposed illustration it affords of the theory of the progress of evil as a consequence of the Fall, together with its awful but vain punishment.

It is as a punishment for sin that the story is recited. And yet it is confessed how vain the effort to subdue evil by such means, viii. 21. The evil springs from the heart, and breaks out inevitably and early.

If evil is to be restrained other than violent means must be adopted. Meanwhile the so-called Noachic covenant is made, of which the pledge is the beautiful *Rainbow* on the dark cloud.

IV.

Read *Genesis* xii. 1-9, xiii.

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—‘Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred. I will make of thee a great nation, and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.’

The two preceding chapters of names are of interest as shewing what the Hebrews knew of the peoples of the world, and an exceedingly little world it was! We are not concerned with them, but in the selection of one people from the rest as the sphere of a special revelation of God, and the instrument of divine blessing for the world.

1. The selection consists of a family that is to narrow down for several generations. Lot, Ishmael, and Esau are severally excluded: the progress lies through Isaac and Jacob.

2. This family, thus selected, will be disciplined by sorrowful toil in Egypt, and

3. Will then have given it a land in which shall be attempted the great scheme of a godly people.

It is to be remembered that the stories in which these ideas are embodied were not written for that purpose. They are legends and traditions that have their interpretations other and apart from the scheme of divine providence, as later interpreted. But they are selected and somewhat rudely fitted together to illustrate this view of providence.

V.

Read *Exodus* xx. 1-21.

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—‘And the people said unto Moses, “Speak thou with us,

and we will hear; but let not God speak with us lest we die.”’

We now see this people, the supposed children of Jacob, son of Isaac, son of Abraham, the chosen of God. They have grown into a great people, have been disciplined by thralldom, and now, delivered with great wonders from their masters, appear before God to hear his commands and renew the covenant made with their great ancestors.

1. The instrument of this great deliverance is Moses, a name greater than all others in the religious history of Israel. He brings from Egypt a culture far ahead of that which belongs at this period to his real or adopted people.

2. He it is who organizes them into the beginning of a nation, with laws and religion whose tendency and intention appear to be to keep this people separate and apart from all others.

3. After a lengthened stay in the desert they become fitted for the invasion of Canaan. It is, however, many generations before the stamp of desert life upon them is effaced.

Whilst as to Moses, in him arose that religious influence that afterwards culminated in Judaism.

VI.

Read *Joshua* xxiv. 1-25.

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—‘Choose you this day whom ye will serve . . . as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.’

This great warrior Joshua had been the servant of Moses, and was evidently a fit instrument to carry out the great ideas of his master. But he is a warrior, which the nation now needed, rather than the founder of new institutions. He has conquered the land. Yet that must not be held to mean more than that, under Joshua, the people had effected such an entrance that they

could never afterwards be wholly dislodged. There were many times when fortune seemed to hang in the balance. They took possession of the hill country, but for a long time the old inhabitants held many cities, especially in the western lowlands. But notice the review placed in the mouth of Joshua. It is a fit conclusion to one part of the great scheme of the Bible. The people are in possession of the land: the older inhabitants are still numerous enough to be a source of danger. The one thing that can keep them separate and give them national cohesion is strict loyalty to the one God Jehovah. Their religion will separate them from others, unite them internally, and cause their final preponderance.

VII.

Read *Judges ix.* 1-21.

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—‘Then the olive, the fig, and the vine severally refused to leave their fruit-bearing to become king over the trees.’

This is almost the one solitary fable of the Bible as distinct from a parable. It is here selected as shewing the ancient conservative spirit of the Hebrew people. This feeling was especially embodied in the prophetic order, and in that religious party at the head of which the prophets stood. At this period in Israel’s history the priest was of no political importance.’ He had but little social prestige. Each head of the family was priest to his household, and the separation of the priest into a distinct caste had as yet hardly made any beginning in Israel. The prophet was the one political and religious force. But in the main he was the embodiment of the Mosaic reform, and the traditional freedom of desert life. Notice,—

1. How the book of Judges reflects the purely tribal conditions of Israel’s life.

2. It shews the political disadvantage the people suffered in their conflict with the more civilized peoples amongst whom

they had intruded; the tendency towards amalgamation with the older inhabitants, and the inevitable popular feeling after that unity which is expressed by kingship.

3. Nothing can exceed the contempt of the Mosaic party, headed by the prophets, for centralized government. Their ideal is that of the quiet life of the agriculturist, living with unrestricted freedom and patriarchal simplicity on his own estate. Gideon had rejected a proffered kingship with scorn (viii. 22-23).

VIII.

Read 1 *Samuel xii.*

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—‘Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way.’

The political necessity for centralized government and the tendency towards it in popular feeling has been found to be irresistible. The desert tribal ideal is now universally felt to be no longer fitted to the changed conditions of Israel’s life. Samuel, the greatest of all the judges of the old type, after much inner struggle, is obliged to recognize this. He has protested against the change (viii.), but has gracefully yielded to the popular wish, and has done his best to find a king worthy of the occasion. Henceforth the political function of the Hebrew prophet diminishes, but he reserves his right and duty to direct both king and people in the way they should go.

1. We are not concerned with the—at least partial—failure of this passage to represent the actual course of history, but only with that view of history which prevailed with the compiler of the documents, themselves composed at a later date, when he selected them for his scheme of Biblical instruction. It is but right to notice the double tradition of Saul’s selection, as shewn in chapters ix. and x.

2. The selection of Saul was in every way worthy of Samuel and the nation, but as the sequel will shew, the king in his secular position was not sufficiently amenable to the direction of the prophet.

IX.

Read *1 Samuel* xvi.

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—‘But the Lord said, “Look not on his countenance, nor on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.”’

We are to conclude that Saul had proved a disappointment to the prophetic party, and more especially to Samuel. We find Saul subjected to certain tests. Absolute obedience to the prophetic direction appears to be required, and in this he failed.

(a) In the appointed sacrifice, chap. xiii. 8-14.

(b) In the war with Amalek, chap. xv.

We shall misjudge these ancient prophets if we suppose them to be guided by our moral standards. So judged, Samuel must shew to disadvantage in comparison with the brave king. The high moral notes that appear here and there are probably derived from the loftier moral perceptions of later times. There was but little of such feelings in the actual times of Samuel and Saul. Saul, though at first (x. 1-13), and perhaps to the surprise of those who knew him, an adherent of the prophets, went back to the more secular idea of kingship. Hence his rejection. The new choice falls on David, a man after God's own heart, *i.e.*, he realizes the prophetic ideal. The troubles of the reign of Saul appear largely due to the desertion of the prophets and their devotion to the prophetic king David, who for all his moral delinquencies ever remains the ideal of the theocratic king.

X.

Read *1 Kings* i. 11-30.

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—‘As the Lord liveth that hath redeemed my soul out of all distress, assuredly Solomon shall reign after me and shall sit upon my throne in my stead.’

During the long and prosperous reign of David, the kingly power has grown beyond all direct prophetic control. Kingship has ceased to be elective and has become hereditary. The house of Saul is nearly extinct, with or without David's connivance. The prophets can interfere only indirectly. But they do interfere by a coalition with the priesthood of the new capital, Jerusalem. Abiathar, the remaining priest of the house of Eli, and Joab, the brave captain to whom with his brothers David has been so largely indebted, favour Adonijah, the king's eldest remaining son. The prophet Nathan and Zadok, the new priest, favour the youth Solomon, who with the aged king have come largely under the influence of Bathsheba. We have here, therefore, a court intrigue in favour of the youth who would be amenable to prophetic influence. Solomon is evidently the protégé of the prophets, who can now maintain their power thus indirectly.

1. It may be they were justified in the event and by their knowledge of the character of the elder brothers of Solomon.

2. It is certain that the prophets were not likely to surrender their political direction without a struggle.

XI.

Read *1 Kings* xi. 26-40.

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—‘If thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways and do that which is right in my sight, to keep my statutes and commandments as David

my servant did; then I will be with thee and will build thee a sure house as I built for David my servant.'

Apart from social and political motives, such as the overwhelming importance of Jerusalem, the luxury of its court life, the burden of taxation, the curtailment of popular liberty and the jealousy of the great house of Joseph, the hand of the prophets is to be seen in the disruption of the kingdom of Solomon. To them the new order of things is extremely distasteful, the more so as the sphere of their influence is very greatly limited. From the disruption onwards, from about 935-735 B.C., the centre of prophetic activity lies in the north; under their direction the grand contest between Jehovah and Baal is waged. They make and unmake kings, are so generally in opposition to them that they may be said to prevent the consolidation of the kingdom, and lead to its ruin. Meanwhile, for this same period of two centuries Judah becomes largely a dependency of Israel, cut off from external politics and confined within the narrow limits of the Judean uplands, and the temple becomes the centre of national worship rather than a mere chapel royal. But the monarchy is stable, the House of David continues, and the glamour of his name gradually works upon the prophets of the north, until they begin to look for the end of their troubles in the reunion of all Israel under this ancient House.

XII.

Read *1 Kings* xviii. 17-39.

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—'And Elijah came unto all the people and said, "How long halt ye between two opinions? If Jehovah be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." And the people fell on their faces and said, "Jehovah is God, Jehovah is God!"'

The word Baal means Lord. It was the name of the supreme God of the Phœnicians and Canaanites. The worship of this God by the Canaanites was no offence to the Israelites, nor for a long time was it held to be other than natural and friendly for the Hebrews to join with their neighbours in the local religious festivals of this god. But it was an offence to that new religious party that dated from Moses. The ancient Mosaic covenant demanded mutual separateness between Israel and Jehovah. 'One God, one people, each for each.' It was not until the imperious Jezebel of Tyre endeavoured to substitute the Syrian cult of Baal for that of Jehovah in Northern Israel, that the question arose as to the fitness of the one or the other to be regarded as the 'True God.' Probably the main element of the great contest in the time of Elijah was that of the nationalism of religion, no question being at the time raised as to the fitness of Baal-worship for the Phœnicians; but at any rate the later prophets interpreted the contest as one concerning the inherent fitness of these rival deities for worship at all. And the superiority attributed to Jehovah arose from the fact that the prophets of Israel were beginning to look upon the worship of Jehovah as moral rather than ceremonial, an idea that involved the universality of religion, though Israel did not yet recognise so much as this. Yet out of this contest which involved both kingdoms in a bloody revolution arose those grander thoughts of Jehovah, which issued in the full monotheistic idea.

XIII.

Read *Isaiah* xi. 1-9, xii.

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—'They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters cover the sea.'

In the North, dynastic revolutions—largely due to prophetic interference—have brought the kingdom to the verge of ruin. Rivalry with Syria has issued in almost the vassalage of Israel. At the present moment both kingdoms have at length agreed on the necessity of a common defence against the growing and threatening power of Assyria. Naturally they desire the union with them of the southern people of Judah. It is at this time that Isaiah of Jerusalem stands forth in the policy of isolation for Judah. The confederate kings of Israel and Syria seek to compel Judah to join with them. Isaiah is apparently successful in thwarting this scheme, but cannot inspire the weak king Ahaz with the necessary courage to stand aloof. This king, therefore, seeks protection from the common enemy by becoming the vassal of Assyria: thus partly accepting and partly rejecting the advice of Isaiah, Ahaz precipitates the ruin both of Syria and Israel. The ruin of the northern tribes left Judah the only stable remnant of the race of Israel.

It is at this period that the great prophet of the south expresses his hope of the establishment and expansion of Judah. This 'Rod out the stem of Jesse' and the 'Branch from his roots' may be Hezekiah, at any rate he is some prince of the royal house of David. In him the ancient stock should regain its strength and importance. Jerusalem was, of course, to be the centre of this kingdom; and this conception became the basis of the wonderful hope of a kingdom, so founded in righteousness that it should undo the evils that sin had introduced, and fill the world with the knowledge of Jehovah. Here is the beginning of the idea of that 'kingdom of God' which forms so large a part of the range of Biblical thought.

XIV.

Read 2 *Kings* xxiii. 1-23.

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—'Surely no such

passover was holden from the days of the Judges, nor in all the days of the Kings of Israel and Judah.'

Josiah was the great-grandson of Hezekiah. In the reign of both these kings Mosaic reforms were enforced, and in both cases it is supposed that they were accomplished under the influence of the prophets. In the days of Hezekiah the groves and image worship were destroyed throughout Judah. There was a reaction against this, which in the days of Manasseh, his son, led to the shedding of much innocent blood. Josiah, a youth of only eight years appears to have been largely under the influence of the prophets and priests. The reformation accomplished under this reign was effected by means of a book now known as Deuteronomy, but which appeared now for the first time. The direction this reform took was in abolishing all the local country sanctuaries and in bringing all the local priests to Jerusalem, thus making Jerusalem the sole religious centre. All alien worshipers were destroyed, and the reformers went so far as to include the destruction of the ancient shrine at Bethel. It is said that *Psalms* lxxii. has Josiah in view. Whether this is so or not, it no doubt correctly expresses the hope entertained of this pious young king. The hoped-for kingdom assumes the same general character as that given in *Isaiah* xi.

XV.

Read *Isaiah* lii.-liii.

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—'Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for Jehovah hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem.'

The Isaiah here is either a second of that name, or, as he is sometimes called, the *Great Unknown*. Assuredly he is the great prophet of the exile, and announces the

return from captivity in chapter xl. The hopes entertained by the elder Isaiah and by the prophets of Josiah's time all ended in failure. The former had counselled the complete isolation of Judah. Jeremiah had insisted on the necessity of willing subordination to Babylon, but both policies had reference to the expected kingdom of God. Yet the prophets were discredited in respect of that which they hoped, and the people had been uprooted and carried away. The reformed worshippers of Jehovah had been kept together by these prophets during the exile, and are now told the meaning of all their sufferings. The nation has been destroyed, the remnant to return is a church in which the Mosaic principles are dominant. The kingdom of God will now be formed, without the old admixture of disturbing secularism. But it is to be observed that the hopes do not now group themselves round any royal person. It is the long-suffering and struggling reforming party that shall now 'see of the travail of its soul and be satisfied.'

XVI.

Read *Ezra* ix.

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—'And now for a little space, grace hath been shewed from the Lord our God to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in his holy place.'

The books of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah may be said to be so continuous in form and identical in spirit as to form one book or Bible by themselves. They all exalt the Levitical priesthood, and view the past history of the nation from their point of view. The prophets have given place to the priest; and the 'Kingdom of God' has shrunk from the lofty conceptions of the two Isaiahs, to that of a mere sect under the dominance of a priestly order. The keynote of the period is separation and isolation from the rest of the world. Separation from the peoples of the land is

a comparatively new thing. It has sprung up during the exile. Now, the whole nation, princes, priests, and people, must refrain from all intermarriage with those who cannot shew a clean Hebrew pedigree. The so-called reform goes even so far as to demand a repudiation of all existing marriages with aliens. That it was opposed by influential persons is clear from the narrative, and also from the book of Ruth, written apparently about this time to shew that the family of David even was not pure in this sense, as he was descended from a Moabitish mother. This priestly Utopia is in strongest contrast with that of the earlier Isaiah. And yet to that order which was thus established at Jerusalem we owe the Judaism of the second temple with its wonderful psalter, and a devotion to a religious ideal to which it would be difficult to find a parallel.

XVII.

Read *Daniel* vii.

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—'But the saints of the Most High shall take and possess the kingdom for ever and ever.'

It is now generally supposed that this book was written about the year 160 B.C., for the special encouragement of the Jews during the great Maccabean struggle for independence. Several centuries have passed since the times of Ezra and Nehemiah. The kingdom of God has so far proved a Utopia. A small land, hardly larger than an English county, with Jerusalem for its centre, has been the scene of a most extraordinary attempt at isolated devotion to Jehovah. So long as it lay on the outskirts of the Persian empire, this isolation was of no secular importance, but now lying far within the circle of Grecian influence it was otherwise. Antiochus Epiphanes of Syria was determined to destroy Judaism and compel the people to accept Greek religion, and worship Jupiter instead of Jehovah. Under Matthias and

his brave sons the Jews revolted and practically won their independence, but it was a long fierce struggle. This book of Daniel is written to encourage them, and it promises the establishment of the kingdom of God for ever. The saints are, of course, the Jews. In ver. 13 we have for the first time the suggestion of a mysterious personage who seems more than man, yet both other and less than the Ancient of Days. This person plays a very important part in the growth of subsequent Messianic literature, being none other than the prototype of the Lamb in the Revelation, as well as of the Christ of Paul and the fourth gospel.

XVIII.

Read *Matthew* iii.

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—‘I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I; whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.’

Except as hope is the mainspring of activity, whether moral or intellectual, the Hebrew Utopia, theocratic commonwealth, or kingdom of God has so far proved an illusion. The Jews have passed from Persian to Grecian, and from Greek to Roman power; yet nothing spiritually, and but little secularly, had been realized. Another attempt is to be made. A new interpretation of divine providence is to be attempted, which with various modifications will sustain hope and give satisfaction for ages; but whether the hope is finally to die out, or give birth to new forms of moral and spiritual energy, the future alone can reveal. After an interval of some five hundred years prophecy revives in John the Baptist. He is called a *forerunner* of the Christ. A forerunner is a servant who must run before his lord to announce his coming, and so the word stands as a metaphor for one whose work is so preparatory

for that of a successor as to render it possible. In modern thought we should speak rather of development, as indicating the inner connection of the work of two or more men. It is in this kind of relationship that Jesus stands to John. Like the ancient prophets, whatever temporal form the kingdom of God may take, John conceives it as based in deepest moral conditions, and, perceiving the absence of these in his day, urges repentance as a prerequisite. It is to be presumed that John and Jesus were already acquainted with each other. But, apart from the legendary introduction of Matthew and Luke, we have no knowledge as to who Jesus really was, except that he was a Nazarene.

XIX.

Read *Matthew* iv. 1-17.

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—‘From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”’

In such words Matthew and Mark shew that Jesus started at the Baptist's own standpoint. All the gospels shew a most intimate connection between the two men, but in Luke the mental position of Jesus seems more independent, whilst in John it is made to appear immeasurably superior. It is to be observed that in John the attitude of Jesus is that of a young man coming to his own, with none to know him but the Baptist, yet with a manner that impresses several of the Baptist's disciples. In the other three gospels the attitude is that of one who has accepted a wondrous call, and must prepare for his work by a period of trial and seclusion. In the story of the temptation we have that period—probably terribly real—cast in the strongest lights of word pictures; and we must take it as casting into dramatic form three principles for the guidance of his personal conduct in this Messianic enterprise.

(a) He will use no power with which he is entrusted, for personal ends.

(b) He will be no miracle-monger nor place himself in any position from which his credit can be saved only by a miracle.

(c) He will eschew all secularism such as, so far, had invariably wrecked the Messianic idea.

Notice further that it is the imprisonment of John that occasions the independence of Jesus; though the fourth gospel represents his ministry as partly contemporaneous, and in some measure of rivalry, up to the time of the Baptist's incarceration.

XX.

Read *Matthew* v. 1-12.

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—'Blessed.'

This Sermon on the Mount is to be regarded as in large measure a collection of the sayings of Jesus, shewing in general the abstract principle on which the kingdom of God is to be founded. It is no sermon on one simple topic, nor was it ever uttered as it stands here. The sayings of which it consists were some of them many times repeated, and in various connections. But this group of beatitudes, with which the *sermon* opens, is a happy artifice for comparing the principles of the new dispensation with the Mosaic decalogue. Compare *Ex.* xx. 1-17 and see if the following particulars do not appear.

1. Both stand at the head of their respective dispensation.

2. Both are given on a mountain.

3. Both are resolvable into ten subjects.

4. The ancient was a formal and imperative code, that might indeed regulate conduct, but could convey no inspiration so as to create any favourable emotion. Here the single word 'blessed' shews the polar opposition of the new spirit to the old. It is such a suggestion as to provoke reflection and moral desire; it waits for some spontaneous response in the heart and conscience. It is the expression of the idea of living expansion and gentle attraction,

contrasted with statutory bonds and deadly constriction. Herein is life, therein is death.

XXI.

Read *Matthew* v. 17-20, vii. 43-48.

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—'Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.'

By the term *Law* appears to be meant the whole body of religious teaching and ceremonies that in the course of ages grew up amongst the Jews. This law was attributed to Moses; but only a few moral precepts, ceremonial rites, and social customs can have reached so far back as to the great lawgiver. To Moses was attributed in common tradition the whole religious cult of the nation. Distinct epochs of change and re-editing can be traced with a fair amount of precision and completeness; but the revered name of Moses covered them all. The passionate regard of the Jews for their ancestral faith and customs is the clue to the extraordinary world-position this race has attained.

Matthew represents Jesus as at first anxious to keep in touch and harmony with the religious instincts of the nation, and represents the mission of Jesus as a complement or fulfilment of the Mosaic dispensation. It is this that has led to the supposition that this gospel is an apology to the Jews (or was written for the use of Jewish Christians). He represents Jesus as not wishing to destroy or depart from Judaism, but rather as aiming at the exhibition of its fundamental principles. This sermon in several respects institutes a comparison between the old and the new, and shews that the new is the expression of the latent principles involved in the crude statements of the old. Hence the teaching of Jesus is regarded as the fulfilment or the fullness of the Mosaic law. It is not adherence to the mere form or letter, but a loyal

acceptance of its intention. Love is the fulfilment of law.

XXII.

Read *Matthew xi. 2-24.*

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—‘Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.’

We have seen the kind of expectation that John, in common with his people, had formed of the coming Messiah. The disciple, at first, seemed to take the same standpoint as his master; but after and during the imprisonment of John, Jesus appears to have shewn such independence of, and divergence from, the Baptist that the latter was in doubt and trouble, which was naturally heightened by imprisonment. Moreover Jesus had not as yet openly declared himself the Messiah: he was apparently waiting for some spontaneous recognition by the public. To the perplexity of John, Jesus replies by throwing him back upon his own appreciation and judgment, suggesting only that himself should be judged by his life and teaching. Unhappily John appears not to have recovered his former confidence in Jesus; for, though worthy to be ranked amongst the greatest of the ancient prophets, he could not see in Jesus the realization of their hopes. His disciples remained a separate school, and many years afterwards, *Acts xviii. 24, xix. 5*, we find a noted member of the Baptist’s following preaching as if he had never heard of Jesus. This rejection of Jesus as the Messiah, if so it may be called, was only a part of a more widespread defection. Verses 20-24 must be taken as representing the rejection of the new prophet by Galilee. Jesus did not fulfil popular anticipations. The people, as well as John, were *offended* in him.

XXIII.

Read *Matthew xii. 46—xiii. 17.*

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—‘Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which

is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother.’

These passages are not usually associated. It seems as if the family of Jesus were amongst those who did not accept him as a prophet, still less as the Messiah. From chapter xii. we should judge that controversy respecting him ran high. The Jewish authorities of Galilee not only rejected him, but probably did much to counteract the popular favour that he at first enjoyed. His family were caught into the popular prejudice, and even feared for his sanity (*Mark iii. 21*). On seeking to get at him whilst he was teaching, their presence is mentioned, and it occasions the sudden thought, ‘Whoso shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven is my brother.’ There is no need to interpret this into any lack of respect; but it is the assertion of the principle that in the kingdom of God, moral relations take precedence of the ordinary relations of kindred. But such an idea of kinship must be necessarily of slow growth. Hence the parable of the sower. It shews that the extension of God’s kingdom must be in proportion to the spontaneous response of the heart, and this will be in large measure dependent on native character. We see that the mind of Jesus is here adjusting itself to the thought of a long and slow growth as the condition of the expansion of God’s kingdom. The rest of the parable will speak for itself, but the subsequent explanation has been misunderstood to suggest that the parable was a riddle to puzzle his hearers. If Matthew really thought so, then we must conclude him to have been mistaken.

XXIV.

Read *Matthew xvi. 13-25.*

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—‘Then said Jesus to his disciples, “If any man will come after me let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me,”’

One can hardly imagine this moral significance of the cross to have arisen in the actual days of Jesus: it certainly bears the impress of later times, but otherwise it befits the occasion in which Matthew places it. So far Jesus has found no clear recognition of his Messiahship; and only such recognition of his claims as to point him out as a dangerous person to be put down by opposition. The twelve disciples whom he appears to have specially singled out were not always with him. We may suppose them sometimes to be following their usual occupations, and at others being sent as missionaries to the towns and villages of Galilee. In this intercourse with the people they would have opportunities of gauging popular opinion, such as would not present themselves to Jesus. He, therefore, takes the occasion of their retreat into the northernmost parts of Galilee to ask the disciples what the people think of him. It is significant of the crudeness of popular thought that some regarded him as John the Baptist risen from the dead, others compared him with Elijah, or with Jeremiah. The decisive word, however, comes from Peter when the disciples are asked for their personal opinion, 'Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God.' This confession is apparently as decisive an epoch in the life of Jesus as his baptism. He has found express recognition. But if Jesus took this as an inspired utterance, it had a meaning to him other than to them. To him it meant first a painful rejection and death. His reply to Peter's objection shews that he held him to be no friend, who should attempt to turn him aside. They, as well as he, must surrender themselves to the suffering before they thought of the glory.

XXV.

Read *Matthew* xviii. 11-35.

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—'For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.'

Though Jesus nowhere formulates the community of which he so frequently spoke under the expression, 'kingdom of heaven,' it is clear, from his assuming the position of the Messiah, that this society was often if not always in his mind. The complaints of all the great prophets had been that society, as commonly understood, failed precisely in respect of its weakest members. To these, therefore, Jesus ever turns. The poor, the weak, and the socially outcast are always the problems of every form of civilization. The kingdom of heaven, most especially as conceived by Jesus, was the hoped-for solution of this great question of human society. No doubt verses 15-20 reflect the conditions of the evangelist's own times, but traditionally they also interpret the founder's ideas of the internal equipment of the new society for the discipline of its members, and for the self-sufficient management of its own affairs. Mutual love and forbearance without limit was to be a fundamental principle, as may be seen from other passages in the gospels, but exclusion of the utterly refractory was a power either from the first entrusted to the community or was afterwards assumed as necessary. But it was not to be forgotten that reformation of character and the fullest encouragement of virtue was the *raison d'être* of the divine society. The form of the parable suggests a threat, and is less beautiful than *Luke* xv. The expression, 'seventy times seven,' must not be taken here as a limit. No moral teacher may prescribe limits. The laws of right and wrong are indefinite, and whoso would prescribe limits institutes casuistry, than which nothing is more fatal to moral growth.

XXVI.

Read *Matthew* xix. 16-29.

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—'If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor and thou shalt

have treasure in heaven, and come and follow me.'

The man who questions Jesus as to how eternal life, i.e., moral perfection, is to be obtained, receives his answer by reference to the main principles of moral conduct. But with these the man is familiar and claims to have been observant of them from his youth. From Jesus he expected more and other; and thus obtains, as a further answer, that these principles must be complemented by the surrender of his property to the poor, and by taking up a definite attitude of discipleship to Jesus. The highest moral principles are thus to receive expression in devoted social conduct.

The special form of this devotion is to be understood as referring to the social side of the divine society which Jesus aimed at establishing.

1. As to how far such a scheme really entered into the intentions of Jesus, the following points should be observed. In *Matthew* v. 3 the words 'in spirit' appear to be a later addition; otherwise verse 3 in no sense differs from verse 5. Chap. vi. 24-34 may have reference only to the propagandists of the kingdom, yet it looks as if intended as a principle of the community; xi. 5 speaks of the gospel as special to the poor; xxv. 31-46 makes devotion to the 'Brethren of Christ,' the standard of judgment. *Acts* iv. 32-37 shews that such a community was actually attempted. — *Acts* v. shews that if the rule of surrender of property were not obligatory, at least social stress led in that direction. We may therefore assume that something of the kind was in the mind of Jesus, though as the expected result of brotherly love.

2. Whether such a scheme be essential to Christianity.

- (a) At any rate the Christian community has survived the abandonment of the scheme.
- (b) Such a scheme can only exist on the condition of perfect trust and trustworthiness of the members.

And such qualities are subject to too many variations to render it other than temporary. It demands perfection in the outset, whereas perfection can only be the result of discipline.

- (c) It has been possible under monastic conditions. The particular affections of family appear to be fatal to it.
- (d) Such success as the principle has yet obtained, as in the Franciscan orders and others, has induced such intolerable evils as have often led to their forceful suppression. Nothing but a sustained enthusiasm and love would seem to be capable of effectively realizing communism in any general form.

XXVII.

Read *Matthew* xix. 30-xx. 16, 20-28.

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—'So the last shall be first, and the first last; for many be called but few chosen.'

The *form* of the parable is determined by the thought of the inversion, in the new society, of all ordinary principles that obtain in social life. Peter had said, 'We have surrendered all and followed thee, what shall we have therefore?' Such a demand is quite pertinent to ordinary life, where, on the whole, rewards are proportionate to devotion to prescribed ends; but the issue of such a principle is finally so to handicap virtue, and even natural talent, that accidents of position almost completely dominate life. In the kingdom of God, as this new society is generally called, this common principle is set on one side. Merit will be held to consist not in accident but in devotion. So much personal reward for so much personal service would seem to be naturally just; but those who shall aim at perfect social virtue will not bargain for their penny, nor murmur that late comers have equal advantages with themselves. In this new society service is

itself the reward and the greatest claim to distinction; and this implies such devotion to the scheme that no room is left for personal considerations. This is the great inversion, by which the last is first and the first last. Many are called to it, but few are the chosen ones to realize it.

XXVIII.

Read *Matthew* xxi. 1-16.

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—‘Tell ye the daughter of Zion, “Behold thy king cometh unto thee, meek and sitting upon an ass and a colt the foal of an ass.”’

From the first three Gospels we should suppose this to have been the first and only visit that Jesus made to Jerusalem. All the Gospels refer to this public entrance as of a symbolic nature, nor is it difficult to discover its real meaning. It was a striking inauguration, at Jerusalem, of his Messianic mission.

(a) Jesus seems to have felt it incumbent on him to recall an ancient Messianic picture, *Zech.* ix. 9, which, though it referred to a known prince, probably Hezekiah, was like other unfulfilled anticipations carried over to later times. It is, by the way, curious to note that the prophet only meant one ass; here it is misunderstood to mean two.

(b) That this unusual act was regarded as a royal Messianic pretension is evident from the Hosannas.

(c) The act of cleansing the temple was one of autocratic authority. It is characteristically placed by John at the beginning of Christ's ministry. In John there is no *development* of events, that being inconsistent with the plan and ideal of that Gospel. The event is evidently better placed in the other Gospels.

The existence of this cattle-market in the precincts of the Temple was a necessary appendage to a sacrificial religion. Its violent disturbance was unjust to those

concerned with the necessary traffic; but it was a most signal protest against the whole religious system that centred at Jerusalem. Such an act of authority, and the expression of his Messiahship in such a form, could not but provoke the deepest enmity.

XXIX.

Read *Matthew* xxi. 23-32.

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—‘When Jesus was come into the temple, the chief priests and elders of the people asked him, “By what authority doest thou these things, and who gave thee this authority?”’

This very natural question, from those who were responsible for public order in the city, was met by Jesus in a way calculated to increase rather than allay resentment. Here, as elsewhere, he makes no attempt to substantiate his claims, but lays the burden of their rejection upon those who dispute them. Probably Jesus had good grounds for this early and pronounced antagonism to the authorities in Jerusalem. We may well suppose they were cognizant of and in agreement with the Jewish opposition in Galilee: anyhow, from beginning to end, there appears to be no effort at conciliating a very natural opposition from the religious leaders. We must not forget, however, that his Messianic rôle included rejection by his people, and death at their hands; and it is difficult to see how this could have been effected had Jesus succeeded in being accepted at Jerusalem. At present his answer consists:—

(a) Of the dilemma about the mission of the Baptist.

(b) Of the inference to be drawn from the parable of the two sons, wherein the elder sufficiently portrays the orthodox Jewish church, fanatically zealous for the law and polity of Israel, and the younger confessedly represents the outcasts from Jewish society, who yet in their repentance do the will of the Father.

XXX.

Read *Matthew* xxi. 33-xxii. 14.

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—‘The kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.’

Heretofore Israel had rejected the prophets, and it was now on the point of rejecting one who aimed at being and claimed to be more than they. This, however, was to be the last: the nation rejects its Messiah, the Messiah now rejects the nation. This thought is presented under two aspects.

1. The parable of the vineyard seems to regard the nation in its corporate capacity; a religious community largely built upon the theocratic idea. How it could have realized Christ's ideal, even had his claims been allowed, it is impossible to say. Though, at the outset, Jesus evidently wished to avoid breaking with the nation, that national ideal had failed under Persian, Greek, and Maccabean; nor was there any likelihood it could succeed under the Romans. Anyway that solution is rendered impossible by the rejection of the Messiah.

2. The second parable contemplates an appeal to the outside world. It is not quite clear whether the outsiders are the Gentiles, or the outcasts of Israel. Yet the episode of the wedding garment seems to refer to individual character; it is otherwise unintelligible. If so, we may judge that the new kingdom was intended to be founded on eclectic principles, and not based on organized society, though organization is not excluded.

XXXI.

Read *Matthew* xxii. 15-40.

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—‘Then went the Pharisees, and took council how they might entangle Jesus in his teaching.’

The conflict now enters on the stage of conspiracy. The Pharisees were, as a party,

those from whom Jesus might have expected to win most adherents. They were distinguished for religiousness of demeanour, for strong prejudice against the introduction of foreign ideas and customs, and were zealous for their idea of the kingdom of God, which unfortunately was not that of Jesus. Their antagonism has been very pronounced, and now they take the lead in the conspiracy to confuse Jesus in his public teaching and so discredit him. Their allies in this matter were:—

1. The Herodians, a sect that looked to the Herodian family as the best means of preserving the Jewish nationality. This family were not even Jews, but had been connected with the Maccabean House by the marriage of Herod the Great with Mariamne. Until the death of her children, not a few Jews looked in that direction for the Messiah; and after their death the national hope still clung to the House of Herod. The question of the tribute money, therefore, interested a large party.

2. The Sadducees were the ruling class, and were the party that naturally clung to the present conditions that assured them the continuance of power. Naturally these could not be Messianists in any intelligible sense. They were bound by public as well as private exigency to discredit Jesus. The question of the resurrection was one that seemed to promise them success. The answer of Jesus, though not logically complete as given here, appears to have been offered and accepted as sufficient; and all three answers shew Jesus to have possessed great dialectic skill.

The conspiracy also shews that it was hoped not to be necessary to resort to violence.

XXXII.

Read *Matthew* xxii. 41-xxiii.

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—‘Jesus saith unto them, “If David call the Messiah Lord, how is he his son?”’

Having escaped the intended confusion and having silenced his opponents, Jesus now delivers a counter attack.

1. He contends against their conviction that the Messiah must be a descendant of David. That is clearly the sense of the argument, and it reduces the genealogy of chapter i. to a mere literary adornment, which is also clear from its own construction. The psalm referred to is cx., and is now generally held to refer to the high priest, Simon, brother to Judas Maccabæus, in whom the dignity of high priest was made hereditary. It is called a psalm of David, much as the Law is called Mosaic.

2. The chapter xxiii. is one long denunciation of the Pharisees. It is strange that there is here no attack on the Herodians and Sadducees. The aims of the former were nothing to Jesus, and the Sadducees were clearly within their right, as guardians of the Temple and its services. The Pharisees were Messianists or nothing, as had been the Maccabees until they degenerated. It is difficult not to believe that Jesus intentionally lashed to frenzy the only party that could have understood or in any way sympathized with his aims. Notice the gathering wrath against the whole order until it culminates in the fierce threat that the criminal attitude of the nation against the prophetic order shall be visited on them.

XXXIII.

Read *Matthew* xxiv. 2-31.

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—‘The disciples ask Jesus privately, “What shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world?”’

In Lesson 17 reference was made to the Messianic literature that prevailed from the time of the writing of the book of Daniel onwards. Remnants of this now in our possession are the ‘Sibylline Oracles,’ the ‘Book of Enoch,’ the ‘Psalter of Solomon,’ the ‘Assumption of Moses,’ and others, in which are to be found numerous

and not quite consistent references to the signs that shall precede the coming of the Messiah. In this whole chapter we have such resemblances to these books that it is impossible not to feel that this scene has been largely influenced by them. The general difference, however, appears to be that the Gospels assume two advents of the Messiah, the first in humility, accompanied by suffering, rejection, and death; the second in glory, triumph, and judgment; whereas the books referred to generally speak of but one coming. Whilst evidently influenced by these semi-prophetic visions, this chapter has yet made an independent use of them, but how far it is Jesus or Matthew who thus accommodates them to Christian purpose, we cannot say. Probably Jesus and his immediate followers dwelt largely in this kind of mental atmosphere, and we shall see how greatly Christian thought was affected and misled by it.

XXXIV.

Read *Matthew* xxiv. 36-51.

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—‘Watch, therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.’

This passage must be taken in connection with the whole of chap. xxv. This second advent of Christ will be sudden and in general unexpected. The three parables of chap. xxv. all bear upon the conduct of the followers of Christ during the period of suspense. That of the virgins illustrates the necessity of being always in a state of readiness: that of the talents emphasizes the duty of diligently discharging their trust; and that of the judgment, shews the standard by which that conduct shall be appraised. The details of each picture must be held to be strictly subordinate to the principal idea. In them all, the conclusion seems to have strict reference to the Messianic community. The outside world does not appear to be even hinted

at. As elsewhere shewn, the net of the kingdom of God gathers in of every kind. All thus gathered are to be prepared, have a charge to which they must be faithful, and will be judged by the conditions of their *social virtue* in the new community. This shews how completely separate and elective this kingdom was conceived to be.

XXXV.

Read *Matthew* xxvi. 1-5, 14-16.

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—‘Then were assembled the chief priests, the scribes and the elders of the people at the palace of the high priest, and consulted how they might take Jesus by craft and kill him.’

We have seen (Lesson 31) the conspiracy to discredit Jesus as a teacher fail, and are thus prepared for the more violent means which the rulers now adopt. This was inevitable. The Herodians were committed to a theory which did not include Jesus; the Pharisees were rendered utterly hostile by the scornful lashing they had received; and the Sadducees, besides their interest in the existing religious system, and the dignities of their offices, were responsible for the orderly behaviour of the people. The general feeling was that the sacrifice of one man was a less evil than the increasing popular ferment that could only end in Roman interference.

The treason of Judas is a harder thing to understand.

- (a) It seems incredible that he could have been led to it for so paltry a sum.
- (b) It has been plausibly suggested that he only hoped to compel Jesus to declare himself, and as a zealot, was impatient of his master's passive attitude.
- (c) It was probably that he had lost all faith in Jesus as the Messiah, though his subsequent suicide looks like the

despair of one who had committed an infamous deed for a worthy object, and has seen that object fail (xxvii. 3-10).

XXXVI.

Read *Matthew* xxvi. 6-13.

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—‘For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial.’

What is true friendship? Surely that which helps a man to be and do his best. (Compare *Matt.* xvi. 21-23, Lesson 24.) In that instance Peter sought to mould Jesus to his own ideas. That was not friendship; it was hostility, because its success would have induced Jesus to be and do other than what he felt to be his mission. In this instance we have friendship shewing itself otherwise. Jesus felt it his mission to die. From this Peter and the other disciples would have dissuaded him. This woman's love was not less, but greater; in that she saw that only death could crown his work, and by this symbolic act she wished to sustain him in consistency to the end. This was highest friendship.

XXXVII.

Read *Matthew* xxvi. 17-35.

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—‘And Jesus said to his disciples, “Go into the city to seek a man and say, The Master saith, My time is at hand, I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples.”’

The first three Gospels represent this supper as the actual passover, eaten on Friday the 14th of the month. John represents it as taking place on Thursday the 13th. It is now impossible to know which was the fact; but the former would place the crucifixion on Saturday, the latter on the Friday. If the first three Gospels

are correct, then we seem to have two feasts, the passover and a commemorative addition. The church has kept the *forms* of commemoration with bread and wine, but has largely taken over the meaning of the passover sacrifice. The dogmatic value of the sacrificial idea is now very seriously questioned by many, but it would be quite consistent with the interpretation Jesus gave of the Messianic idea that he should entertain the notion of sacrifice and ransom, and that the symbols of bread and wine should be a memorial of that thought, though we may see good reason for setting that aside. In any case, modern objections to the idea of atonement by sacrifice, however valid, do not justify us in therefore supposing that Jesus had no such idea associated with his expected death.

XXXVIII.

Read *Matthew* xxvi. 36-56.

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—‘O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me except I drink it, Thy will be done.’

That something mysterious and awful attached to this expected death may be judged from the agony of suspense in the garden. And we must judge of it not according to our ideas to-day, but rather according to those that were likely to affect Jesus. It could hardly have been the mere expectation of even a cruel and unjust death. The idea of sin-bearing was probably the cause of such sensitive shrinking; but the noble self-recovery, ‘Thy will be done,’ is sublime, and his surrender to the companions of the traitor full of dignity. But notice

- (a) The disciples even yet think of violent resistance. Brave Peter!
- (b) To their disappointment, Jesus is utterly passive.
- (c) Now all the disciples desert him, even Peter!

So far are they, as yet, from appreciating his purely passive attitude. The Scriptures must be fulfilled!

XXXIX.

Read *Matthew* xxvi. 57-75.

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—‘But Jesus held his peace. Then after the adjuration of the high priest he said, “Hereafter shall ye see the son of man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven.”’

This passage is much akin to some of the Apocryphal visions of the advent of the Messiah. But, in the belief of Jesus, the glory could come only after rejection, humiliation, and death. Hence his perfectly passive attitude during the priestly and Roman examination. He makes no protest against perjured witnesses, nor offers any explanation in respect of those accusations that had a basis and semblance of truth. In respect of the destruction of the Temple no explanation could be received by the hierarchy. Had Jesus defended himself on the second charge by the argument of *John* x. 33-38, he could not have been convicted of blasphemy. But if he were acquitted how could the Scriptures be fulfilled or his Messianic rôle carried out? In such case failure and discredit were inevitable. He will not, therefore, lift a finger to save himself, and so he allows judgment to go by default. Nor, considering the dangerous ferment of the public mind on the question of the Messiah, was it other than inevitable that his removal should be attempted? They had failed to confute him, force was the only argument left to his enemies.

XL.

Read *Matthew* xxvii. 11-50.

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—‘My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?’

It is to be observed that the examination by Pilate turned on the new charge of conspiring against Rome. Pilate thinks nothing of the charge, and is distinctly

favourably disposed to Jesus. But his own evil excesses as ruler now render him weak, where a just man would have been strong. From these words of Jesus it would seem, either that he expected deliverance at the end, or that some doubt of himself and his mission came upon him in his last extremity. The same feeling shews itself in Mark. In Luke, Jesus commends his soul to his Father, and there is no sign of failing constancy. In John, the last words are 'It is finished.' And, indeed, that which Jesus had undertaken was finished with marvellous patience and persistence. To his own mind his death was the climax of his life, and it is no wonder that his own estimate of its significance has been accepted by an admiring world. It is certain that to have escaped such an end would have destroyed his mighty influence by reducing his life to the commonplace.

XLI.

Read *Matthew* xxviii. 1-20.

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—'Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them, and teaching them to observe whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo! I am with you even to the end of the world.'

The last we saw of the disciples was their desertion. One had betrayed, another had denied; all had deserted him. Now they are together again, except Judas. We do not know all that took place in the interval. Jesus was put to a shameful and cruel death, but that could only fix in their minds the idea of his failure. What has specially happened is called the Resurrection. Whether this was real or imaginary has been and still is the greatest non-moral question connected with Christianity.

(a) The Scriptures and church tradition assert that Jesus died on the cross and came to life again.

(b) Rationalists are divided into two groups.

(1) Those that believe that Jesus died and that his resurrection was the expression of a deeply affected imagination.

(2) Those that seek to account for this heated imagination by assuming that Jesus did not quite die on the cross; that he revived and met his disciples again in Galilee; and that the present interview was his final separation from the disciples.

Let each examine the Gospels and judge which they think best consists with what is declared. It is to be observed that only Luke and the Acts mention the Ascension, and that these books know nothing of the visit to Galilee.

XLII.

Read *Acts* i. 12-26.

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—'Of these men which have accompanied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, from his baptism by John to his removal from us, one must be ordained to be a witness of his resurrection.'

This writer of the Acts professes to be the same who wrote the Gospel by Luke. He is confessedly somewhat late. Evidently later than Mark or Matthew—probably later than John. We are now in a very different atmosphere. The scene is changed to Jerusalem, and we hear no more of Galilee. The followers of Jesus now number about one hundred and twenty, including his mother and brethren. Were they converted in that interval during which Jesus was alive and in retirement, after his crucifixion? At any rate, some considerable interval, greater than that from the passover to the pentecost, would seem to be necessary. The person chosen to fill the place of Judas was

Matthias, supposed to be the same as the publican, and the author of the Gospel. Luke appears not to know this, for in his Gospel the incidents are associated with Levi, which elsewhere are associated with Matthew. Here then we have a church and a sort of inner college of twelve, whose chief function for the present is to bear witness to the resurrection, which henceforth becomes the cardinal fact of the new belief.

XLIII.

Read *Acts* iii. 12-26.

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—‘Unto you first God, having raised up his son Jesus, sent him to bless you in turning away everyone of you from his iniquities.’

In this appeal to Jerusalem we are to notice the great prominence of Peter. At length he better understands the mission of the Master whom, in his anger and despair, he denied. It must have been something very remarkable that drew Peter out of his despair and awoke within him this marvellous enthusiasm. It was doubtless that period of quiet intercourse with Jesus subsequent to the crucifixion. Notice how in his appeal he finds himself upon the ancient prophets. In many of the Gospel references, it is asserted that Jesus did many things ‘that the Scriptures might be fulfilled,’ as if Jesus were intentionally creating and carrying out a parallel. This was not understood at the time, but now there is an element of surprise to find that these Scriptures have been fulfilled; and this becomes the chief proof to themselves, and the basis of their appeal to the Jews, that Jesus was verily the Christ.

XLIV.

Read *Acts* ii. 41-47, iv. 33-37.

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—‘And all that believed were together, and had all

things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men as every man had need.’

For other remarks on the communism of Jesus see Lesson 26. We must regard this as an attempt to carry out what were believed to be the intentions of Jesus. It evidently sprang from the pure and simple love which these disciples bore to each other and to Jesus. How they could be together, which seems to imply that they lived in common, is not easy to see, in such a place as Jerusalem. Some such communities, excluding women, existed in the Eastern wilderness; but the presence of both sexes must have made this a very different kind of attempt. Another suggestion is given in iv. 46, where the breaking of bread is from house to house. The one overpowering thought seems to have been that Jesus would soon return to inaugurate the new age. Later on, we find this church dependent on the alms of affiliated churches; but with the failure of enthusiasm and the deferment of Christ’s second coming, this peculiar communism decayed and soon passed away, except in ascetic communities.

XLV.

Read *Acts* v. 17-40.

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—‘If this counsel or this work be of man it will come to nought; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it.’

What are rulers to do in presence of an enthusiasm that threatens to undermine existing authorities? Oppose it, and it will probably thrive the more; opposition that falls short of extermination is futile. Ignore it, and the danger is equally great. Such a movement as that of early Christianity was exceedingly dangerous to the stability of the older social order. This must not be forgotten, in judging of the conduct of the Jewish authorities. As the word angel means a messenger, we are at liberty to

suppose that the liberation of the Apostles was effected by some one in power, and favourable to the new movement. And this would be all the more serious for the authorities, as it would show that their power was being seriously undermined. Notice the continuance or the re-appearance of those effects of enthusiasm, which shew themselves in the healing by the Apostles, as by Jesus.

XLVI.

Read *Acts* vi. 1-15.

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—‘We have heard him say that Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place and change the customs that Moses delivered unto us.’

This diaconate which was instituted to manage the secular affairs of the community was fraught with i-sues of far wider importance than the direction of communism. The members appear to have been all Grecians, that is to say, Jews of the Grecian world, except one who was a proselyte Greek. They were probably men of wider culture and sympathies than the Palestinian Jews, certainly were more so than the Apostles are likely to have been. In Stephen we have the first of those who saw the universal ideas involved in the teaching of Jesus; he is the author of that outer and Gentile movement that attained such significance some years later. The defence of Stephen was one sustained argument for that enlargement which all the changes and growth of Mosaism successively indicated and foreshadowed. The inevitable conclusion of the speech is anticipated by his audience who, beside themselves with fanatical fury, hurry the speaker away to a martyr's death.

XLVII.

Read *Acts* ix. 1-31.

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—‘Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me to

bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings and the children of Israel.’

Saul, afterwards known as Paul, is the true successor of Stephen. We may well believe that his fury against the Church was the expression of a mind greatly disturbed at what Stephen had taught. It looks like an attempt to stifle his own rising convictions by extraordinary hostile activity. Compare vii. 58 and viii. 3. Notice also the divergence between this story of Saul's conversion from that given in the Epistle to the Galatians. As that letter is regarded as genuine, the account here must be looked upon as another tradition or an attempt at catholic conciliation, which seems a special mark of this book. There are, at the time of its composition, two very hostile parties in the Church—the followers of James and those of Paul. This account makes Saul in a measure dependent on the Apostles at Jerusalem. In the Epistle to the Galatians that dependence is wholly repudiated. This conversion of Saul was a new epoch in the history of Christianity; and his importance must be regarded as second only to Jesus. To him, even more perhaps than to Jesus, is due that universalism that was latent in the teachings of the Master.

XLVIII.

Read *Acts* xi. 19-30, xii. 25.

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—‘And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.’

After varied successes in Palestine, due largely to the persecution that began with the death of Stephen, the new faith reaches Antioch, the capital of Syria. Partly from its importance, partly from its freer mental atmosphere, and still more from its wide intercourse with other parts of the Empire, Antioch became, for a good while, the most important of all the churches. Jerusalem of course would remain the sacred city, and

its church the mother church; but locally and morally it was unfitted to lead the destinies of Christianity. Apart from sentiment, and the fearful sufferings of its inhabitants, its destruction in 74 A.D. was of utmost advantage to the new faith.

The name Christian was probably given by outsiders—possibly in derision. It is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word Messiah. It not only implies that the word Christ was much used by the members of the Church, but also that the human personality of Jesus was retiring from its earlier prominence, and giving place to more dogmatic conceptions: system was taking the place of morality, dogma of piety.

XLIX.

Read *Acts* xiii. 1-5, 14, 15, 38-49.

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—‘It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you, but seeing ye put it from you and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.’

The importance of this new church in Antioch may be seen from the names given. But more important still was the distinctly missionary enthusiasm that sprang up there. Paul has now found his true place and work. In this first journey he has Barnabas as companion. So far the Acts represent the latter as lending Paul the advantage of countenance and leading. But though the stress laid on his name as the ‘Son of Consolation’ implies that he was a good speaker, it is now Paul who takes the lead. Of the change of name from Saul to Paul we know nothing; but to the writer it seems to be connected with the Governor of Cyprus. The speech at Antioch is on the same plan as that of Stephen, and has the same tendency, viz., to apologise for and justify the new departure in the Jewish hope and to show that Jesus was its fulfilment. Here-

tofore and now, the appeal is to the Jews; but the desire of the Gentiles (verse 42) is a new call to which Paul responds; and is the first overt step taken in the formation of a Gentile or universal Church.

L.

Read *1 Cor.* xiii.

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—‘Now abideth faith, hope, charity; these three; but the greatest of these is charity.’

The word, here translated *Charity*, is not a classical word and is almost peculiar to the New Testament and Christian literature. It is rendered by the word *love* in the new Version. But this interpolation is as objectionable, or more so, than charity. The accident of doles to poverty has rendered the latter unfit; and the peculiarly personal and passionate meaning of the former does not point to the thing intended. No doubt *χάρις* (*Charis*), or the Latin *Charitas*, is the thing meant. It is a gracious kindly demeanour towards all fellow-members of the society. It is not high gifts, nor a common faith, nor a common hope that binds men and women of infinitely varying dispositions and temper together,—it is gracious bearing or charity that is the perfect bond of the community, or as it is called the *bond of perfectness*. Hence the significance of the customary benediction ‘The grace of our Lord.’ Hence this uniquely beautiful passage expresses and extols the great Christian social virtue. It is the one link that can hold together in one community the polar opposites, and the intervening grades of character. It is this even more than personal worth that can render possible the Christian social ideal.

LI.

Read *Acts* xvii. 15-33.

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—‘As I passed by and beheld the monuments of your

religion, I found an altar with this inscription, "To an unknown God." Whom, therefore, ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.'

Athens was the great university of the Roman empire; and in this speech Christianity makes its appeal to the noblest philosophy of the Gentile world. The civilized world was then dominated by three great factors—Hebrew religion, Greek philosophy and science, and Roman law. This dramatic scene unites them all. It is a speech put into the mouth of Paul. As such it must be the barest epitome: not for so few words would such a gathering take place. We must rather take it as a common literary artifice, of which ancient writings present many examples. It can hardly represent the general mental attitude of Paul, who regarded idolatry as devil worship: nor is this the only instance in which the writer of the Acts differs from the acknowledged letters of Paul. We must therefore rather take it as the appeal of Christian philosophy to the philosophic world. It somewhat strains the inscription; for this was not the only altar to an unknown deity; and the Unknown appealed to, did not, in the mind of those who reared the altar, differ in any respect from the known gods, except that for that occasion he could not be identified. It in no sense implied a striving after the monotheistic idea, which is evidently the interpretation of the writer. To us the significant point is that, at any rate, a section of the church at a very early period consciously unified the religious spirit and the object of its devotion under all names and strivings.

LII.

Read *Rev.* ii. 1-6, 8-10, 12-16, 18-20, 24, 25; iii. 1-4, 7-11, 14-22.

CENTRAL THOUGHT.—'He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches.'

This appeal to the seven churches is probably earlier than any part of the Acts, though it represents later conditions. It is selected for our last reading as showing:—


(a) That the early enthusiasm was failing. Much of this rested on the belief of the speedy second coming of Christ. As that event was more and more delayed, so much at least of Christian zeal and separateness as depended on this expectation naturally failed. These messages are an attempt to revive the faith in this expected event.

(b) The sect of the Nicolaitanes here referred to with such special bitterness are supposed to be none other than the followers of Paul, this being a nick-name of the great Apostle. From the Acts of the Apostles we should not judge that divisions in the Church had proceeded to any great and serious lengths. It is from the Galatians that we see how serious this division really was. Notwithstanding the generous decision at Jerusalem (*Acts* xv.) the division was never healed—is not even now. The Jewish element could not endure the grand universalism of Paul; and these churches of Asia Minor, which were the offspring of his great activity were also the object of fiercest attack. Whatever their particular success, it did not prevent that it is from Paul, or from that school of thought which sprang from him, we have such literary monuments as the Epistles to the Hebrews, Ephesians, Colossians and the Philippian, issuing probably in the Gospel by John. It is, moreover, this Pauline interpretation of Christianity that has dominated the Protestantism of modern days; and if we are returning to the simple teaching of Jesus of Nazareth, we do not unlearn the grand universality which Paul and his school so imperishably established in the Church. The Hebrew and the Christian scheme proved indeed a Utopia; but, spiritualized by the great Apostle, it has become the most potent factor of the religious life, and the self-adjusting ideal for all time.

WILLIAM WOODING.

Child Study.

II.—Difficulty of Children's understanding us.

 F it is difficult for us to understand our children it is equally difficult for them to understand us. Take the matter of language, for example. A child's vocabulary is very simple; it does not understand one half the words which grown-up folks use; and, indeed, when explaining the meaning of an unknown word, we may often lead the little minds further astray by our use of other terms equally unintelligible. Here is an example.

On returning from school a boy was asked what he had been learning that day, and his reply was that the teacher had been explaining the meaning of the term, Epiphany. 'Well,' said his mother, 'and what does it stand for?' 'A railway porter,' was the extraordinary rejoinder. 'No, I am sure teacher did not tell you that,' exclaimed the astonished parent. 'Indeed he did,' persisted the boy, 'leastways he said it was a man-at-a-station (*manifestation*), so I suppose he meant the porter.'

This want of children's understanding of our words, which comes partly from ignorance and partly from catch-

ing over quickly at one portion of the sentence without noticing the rest, is a fertile source of our misjudgment of them. When, therefore, they do not obey us, and we begin to think they are obstinate, let us be careful to think again, so as to make quite sure that it is disobedience, and not ignorance of our language, which has caused the apparent naughtiness.

When I was a girl of sixteen, and an enthusiastic teacher of an infant class, I once gave the order to the little ones to 'Rise.' Not a child obeyed. Again I spoke loudly so that all might hear, but with the same result: no one stirred. This surprised me, for everything had been going quite smoothly up to that point. Could it be that the children did not understand so simple a word? I changed it to 'Stand up,' and in a moment all the little ones were on their feet. Since that day the remembrance of this incident has saved me from making many a hasty judgment.

Not long ago a little fellow said something which his father disapproved and the latter exclaimed, 'You say that again, and you'll go upstairs.'

The boy promptly did say it again; whereupon the father caught him up in his strong arms and carried the offender, kicking and obstreperous, into the nursery. When the mother went to her small son she found him in a highly aggrieved state of mind; and he told her in a hurt tone, when she remonstrated with him, 'But father said I *was* to say it again.' And so he had; the child had not understood the irony of the expression, that was all.

Sometimes this misunderstanding leads to really serious trouble, and, in illustration of this, we will go again to one of Mrs. Molesworth's stories. 'Carrots,' a little boy of six, finds a half-sovereign; this he treasures up,—believing it to be a fairy's yellow sixpence,—with the intention of buying a doll for Floss, his favourite sister. The coin is missed; and he, with the rest, denies having seen the 'half-sovereign.' He does not really know what is meant, for his acquaintance with the word is limited to some picture cards of his sister's, belonging to her game of Sovereigns of Europe, which game Floss always called 'my sovereigns.' Naturally the poor little fellow is supposed to have stolen the gold money when it is found in his possession, and he is also accused of telling a lie to hide the theft. Happily mother and Floss come to the rescue, and, starting from the point, 'Carrots is such a good little boy, he couldn't have done it; it must be a misunderstanding some way,' the mystery was

patiently unravelled, and Carrots' innocence made clear.

This brings us again to the concluding thought of our last article, namely, that we should be very careful how we accuse others, and children more especially, of ill-doing. Circumstantial evidence, as it is called, rightly counts for much, but the parents' careful study of their child should count for more; and whenever some discrepancy arises between the two we shall do well to be very careful to allow the latter its full weight.

Curiously enough, although we often feel ourselves baffled when we try to understand our children, we all seem to expect our children to understand us,—to know just what we mean, and even to believe in and love us, without any great reference to what we are, and how we speak and act. Now, children are by no means cleverer than we, they cannot see through the masks we so often wear; but neither are they blind. How can we expect them to think us gentle, truthful, and amiable and just, when in our intercourse with them we use rough speech, are careless of truth, get into angry moods and show favouritism to others. Ah! could we but realise it, our children, whether at class or at home, may be our greatest teachers, by calling forth our best, our very best selves; and indeed, how many fathers have learnt to be gentler-mannered, how many mothers have gathered strength and patience, how many teachers have learnt the principles of

justice from the knowledge that the children were looking to them for an example!

'WOMEN know the way to rear up children,
They know a simple, merry knack
Of tying sashes, fitting baby shoes,
And stringing pretty words that make no
sense,
And kissing full sense into empty words,
Which things are corals to cut life upon,
Although such trifles: children learn by
such,
Love's holy earnest in a pretty play
And get not over early solemnised,
But seeing, as in a rose-bush, Love's Divine
Which burns and hurts not,—not a single
bloom,—
Become aware and unafraid of Love
Such good do mothers. Fathers love as well
—Mine did, I know,—but still with heavier
brains,
And wills more consciously responsible,
And not as wisely, since less foolishly;
So mothers have God's licence to be missed.'
E. B. BROWNING.—*'Aurora Leigh.'*

Gems from Thorndale.

(By WILLIAM SMITH.)¹

'ACTION tests our opinions, harmonises them—makes the needful compromise. As to mere theories of progress, I have known the work of years vanish in an hour. One unlucky fact may throw a whole system to the winds. I have more confidence in the faith of

¹ John Stuart Mill used to say that no writings had had more influence over him for good than those of this author.

the philanthropist who has built a public wash-house, or given to it but a solitary wash-tub, than in the convictions of one who has lived all his days a mere student of humanity.'

'Stand aside from the crowd and look on,—have no other business than to look on;—how mad and preposterous, how purposeless and inexplicable, will the whole scene of human life appear!

'How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable,
Seem to me all the uses of this world!'

Step down into the crowd; choose a path or let accident choose for you; be one of the jostling multitude; have wishes and a pursuit; and how full of meaning and purpose has it all become.'

'Our scientific knowledge is not only *new power* over the forces of nature—it is *new education* for the mind of man. God's universe, better understood, is precisely that teaching of God about which there can be no possible cavil. If He exists—and who can doubt it?—this certainly is a manifestation of Himself to us. Now, unite these two together. On the one hand is science teaching us to *know* God; on the other, a human life growing ever more kindly, active, social, more opulent in all glad emotions and noble sentiments, prompting us to *love* God as the giver of it; and how can you possibly doubt that religion must advance?'

Our Work in the Sunday School:

ITS AIMS, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND
REWARDS.



O not expect anything very original on this subject, please. In the first place, I am a woman, and I have it on the good authority of one of my bachelor friends that 'women can originate nothing; all their best things are but copies of something men have done'; and in the second, I have been interested in the subject for the last five-and-twenty years or more, have read all I have met with in our various periodicals that has borne upon it, with the result that I hardly know myself how much I have absorbed of others' ideas, and how much is the genuine outcome of my own experience.

If we asked one of our earnest orthodox friends, 'What is your aim in teaching in the Sunday school?' we should probably get the answer, 'I want to lead these young souls to Christ.' We should not use those words—there are two or three meanings they might bear which would be so alien to our thoughts and feelings that we could not honestly do so, yet there is a sense in which they seem to me to express our purposes better than almost any others.

For, see! if we could once kindle in our children a passionate love of goodness, a recognition of the highest

ideals of life; touch them with a hatred of oppression, a 'scorn of scorn' and of shams; if we could make them tender and pitiful with weakness, ignorance, and frailty, then, indeed, our work would be done and well done; and we might be content to stand on one side and let this higher life help them in a way which we cannot.

Perhaps we want to realise more than we do, how varied are the avenues leading to each life; and if many lead to one, how they multiply when you think of a group! My own experience in teaching has been principally confined to its most interesting phase, namely, that of young girls just beginning to think, and fast growing to womanhood; and the feeling with which I have met them has often been as that of one who essays to control a complicated machine; who pulls a cord here, and lessens the pressure there, but knows little of what he is doing, save only as he watches anxiously the result.

Yet *everywhere* there are channels, and this seems to me the great hopefulness of Sunday school work. To one girl poems are a delight, and if you can introduce her to good authors you have done her a life-long service; science to another is a friend, and the suggestion of the order and beauty of the universe a revelation for which she will thank you; to more, I think, tales of heroism make their appeal; and both fact and fiction in the hands of a capable teacher will serve to evoke that 'admiration, hope, and love'

which are the life of our life. Others seem to grasp little of any form of lesson; loving little souls! they like to sit near their teacher, or perhaps more often close to some girl-friend; and the best help they can have is the friendly atmosphere which is so essential a part of real Sunday school life—they perhaps hardly answer intelligently a single question, or even get a clear idea of what you try so hard to convey. Yet for them, too, there is food in the opening hymn and prayer and the general sense of association. The results which can be tabulated are rarely the best.

Is the strengthening of our congregations an aim for teachers? Clearly 'yes,' I think. But not their first aim; *that* should be the deepening of the religious and moral life. Yet who that has laboured in our churches has not felt sometimes how glad he would be to work with a larger number? We must bear in mind that 'young hearts will nestle to young hearts,' and if we mean to keep any of these with us, we ought to keep as many as possible, in order that they may grow up together and have the joy of companionship in worship. To secure this result the welcome the elder scholars receive should not be confined to the teachers. It ought never to come as a *surprise* that the senior members of the congregation are pleased to see the young folks attend the services and adopt the church as their religious home.

The responsibilities of a teacher are

many; if we fully realized them all, maybe we should say as so many do, 'Who is sufficient for these things?' and decline the service. Yet if we cannot do all we would, surely it is best to do what we can. (I would put on one side just now those duties most commonly and most properly insisted upon, punctuality and regularity; except so far as they are included in that general plea for self-culture which I would urge on every thoughtful teacher.) For the sake of the children we ought in every way to make the most that is possible of ourselves; we shall notice, probably, that they like to show us their best side; that even, sometimes, they try to deceive us a little that we may not think they have done things of which they would expect us to disapprove; it is an involuntary testimony to their feeling that our standard of righteousness is higher than the average of that around them. But this can only be maintained by our endeavour to fashion our lives through all the week after the model we try to hold up to them on Sundays. Young people are so quick to detect an imposture, and they naturally do not make the allowances which older folk make for themselves and for their friends. We 'shake off the dust from our feet,' and leave behind the weekday toil and temptations. We say our best to the children, and in our hearts we all feel very much like 'Jaazaniah,' of whom the author of the *Gayworthys* wittily says:—

'If Jaazaniah ever does come out more than ordinary, it's on a Sunday, when he's dressed and shaved, and gets the rough off a little. I don't doubt, if he wore a black suit every day, and kept his hands clean, and his chin smooth like a minister, he might talk like one.'

But this straining to appear at our very best, makes our responsibility the greater; if we have let them expect nobility of heart from us, woe betide us if we disappoint them.

And, to my mind, there is another possibility which further deepens this responsibility; it may be that to one or more of the young people who pass through our class, we shall stand as their ideals of life. 'How conceited!' does someone say? Let the images of clay we have put on pedestals, thinking they were marble, be our witness that this, too, may chance. Then, let the pain we have borne when they crumbled to dust be our warning not to inflict it on others; and the pride and joy we feel in those friends who have been all, or more than all, we once thought them, be our incentive; that if, however unworthily, we should have won such a place in some child-heart, we may keep it sacred and never shake its faith in God and duty by our weakness or sin.

'Behold! our reward is with us, and our recompense before us.' Each hour given to them brings its own payment; or if, sometimes, we wait awhile, interest is added. If we have lifted one life to a platform where

others may help it higher, if one weak will has been stimulated to overcome a fault, our work is not without its reward. Every time our scholars come to us for counsel, always when they tell us of their pleasures or their troubles, their smile and greeting when we meet them, their ready help when we suggest some plan of service to them, all these are rewards; and we count them up as our treasures. Besides these, we store for our own future for who among us does not know of tokens of affection from old scholars; of words that at the time they were spoken seemed lost, but which, after many days, have reappeared, perhaps for our *own* refreshment and strength? So great indeed are the rewards of Sunday school work that I often wonder we do not have as much trouble to keep teachers out of our schools as we do to get them in.

EMILY KENSETT.

— 'WOULDEST thou find
Thy heart's elected work, pass through, not
round,
The task that even error has made thine;
For in the midst of uncongenial toil,
E'en by the way of doing it, a man
May raise the office that he longs to fill.
No man may shape the world to suit himself:
But—form'd his own heart's model—let him
work
At anything, and we shall see how soon
It draws about a man a fitting garb.'

ROBERT LEIGHTON.

Memory Pictures.

A SUNDAY SCHOOL ADDRESS.



N old friend, standing up to speak to an audience of children, commenced by telling them that he always carried about with him a picture gallery, and the young people sat up attentively expecting that he was about to produce from his pockets a series of views to look at. But no one, he added, could see his pictures except himself.

Whenever during the day anything happened to attract his attention, some action that pleased him, some pleasant scene, he would try to fix the picture of it in his mind, so that in the evening when he was alone seated in his chair, he was able to call forth again what he had seen, and let these memory pictures pass in review before him.

We all of us can possess such a collection of pictures of our own; sometimes we have them almost against our will. For if we could choose, we should keep only pleasant ones. A picture, an ugly one, I can see now. A front garden with flowers. Three little boys stop and look in through the railings. One pushes the gate open, one looks to see that no one is coming, and the third boy rushes in, tears up some flowers, taking roots and all in his hurry, and then away they all scamper.

I am sorry for the owner of the

garden who on his return home will find that the flowers, he has so cared for, are gone; I am sorry for the people who walk by and will miss the sight of them; but most of all I am sorry for the boys who have taken the flowers away. They will have no real pleasure in them. Fancy the boy bringing them home and mother saying at once, 'Why, Tom, where did you get those flowers from?' Could he reply, 'Stolen.'

A soldier's picture. Away in India in a distant country where parties of soldiers were scattered at posts many miles the one from the other. The enemy is about ready to surprise and kill any Englishman off his guard. Each man in turn has to be on the watch as sentinel many weary hours during the day. There in the midst of danger, and far from friends, the thoughts of one of these soldiers wandered homewards, and a picture came up in his mind of the afternoons spent at Sunday school a few years ago. The talk with the teacher and the hymns sang in the school all came up, and with this picture vividly before him, he determined to write a letter to the teacher and tell him something of the life he was leading, and what he was doing. No pen and ink were of course to be had, but in pencil a long letter was written out, and in a few months' time reached the school, to tell how an old scholar had kept a pleasant memory picture of the Sunday afternoons he had spent there.

Another picture painted by a news-

paper boy called Cleg Kelly. Cleg was a rough, independent lad, and was rather ashamed to be seen caring for or helping any little boy or girl; but he had taken under his protection quite a little family, Vara, her brother, and baby. They had a mother of their own, but I cannot tell you anything good about her; and the poor children would have starved to death, had it not been for the help of neighbours and assistance now and then from Cleg. Down in an underground cellar the little family lived—dark, damp, and in winter, very, very cold. Poor Vara, she had to take charge of baby and little Dick; she quietly acted the part of mother and seldom complained.

One day, Cleg came down the dirty cellar stairs to see his friends. Little Dick was sitting on the floor with his arm bound up in some pieces of rag, an moaning. Vara was trying to hush baby to sleep. But baby wanted food, and there was none to give. Vara signed to Cleg to keep quiet for a little, and at last baby closed its eyes and fell asleep. Then Cleg was invited to come nearer and admire baby. 'Beautiful, is he not?' asked the young nurse, whose quite motherly love prevented her from seeing the starved, pinched look in the small shrunken face. Cleg turned from the anxious face of Vara to little Dick, who was trying to stifle a sob. 'Why, man, have you hurt your arm?—but you should not cry for that,' he said, stooping to look down at the boy's hurt. Dick looked up and then

murmured, 'I don't mind the bruise much, but I have had no breakfast and no dinner.' Cleg looked round for a moment to think, and then burst out of the cellar, up the steps, and on to the shop of his master, the newspaper seller. Would his employer lend him two shillings out of his week's earnings that would be coming to him on the following Saturday? A few questions were asked, and then the money was given; and away the boy ran to make his purchases. Soon Cleg was again coming down the cellar steps, laden with two loaves of bread, some bacon, cheese, and cocoa, a bottle of milk for baby, and an apple for Dick. All these good things burst upon Vara as she looked up at the opened door. She could not believe that these provisions were for her; it seemed a perfect Lord Mayor's feast, and too large a gift to receive. But baby awoke and commenced to cry again, and then all else was forgotten by the little mother in the desire to satisfy its hunger. The milk was put into baby's bottle, and then to baby's mouth, who gave one more cry, perhaps of astonishment at the plentiful supply of fresh milk, and then contentedly and quietly settled down to a good meal. Dick, seated on the doorstep, was eating a piece of bread and cheese, holding it in one hand, while in his other he held his apple safe. Vara was looking happily at baby,—and this was the picture Cleg saw and took away with him as he turned and bounded up the steps on his way home.

It was a picture he would remember all his life.

A story is told of a rich man who possessed houses, gardens, fields, and woods, and almost everything except the love of family, friends, or servants. He was a hard, cruel man. His own son he had turned out of doors for acting generously towards some poor people. This son was married, and lived with his wife and children in a small cottage near; working in the fields to earn just sufficient for food, clothing, and shelter. The rich father knew what a hard life his son led, but never gave help nor would he even allow his name to be mentioned. One by one his friends left him, and he now led a very lonely life.

Every morning he would walk through the rooms of his large house, then through the gardens, then through his fields, his woods, and past his cottages, always suspiciously looking about him, as if in fear of being robbed. Poor people who were behind with the rent were turned out of their cottages into the streets, boys found collecting a few dry twigs in his woods were sent to prison, and his servants lived in constant fear of him. As he passed through the village no one wished him a friendly 'good-day,' but hurried quickly by.

Now the rich man wanted his house painted, and there came a man who offered to do the work so cheaply that his offer was at once accepted. 'Mind,' said the rich man, suspiciously, 'it is a bargain, you have undertaken to

paint the house and you will have to finish the work.' 'It is a bargain,' said the painter, 'and I will finish it'—and there was a strange smile on his face as he spoke.

On the following afternoon the rich man came to look after the painter and see how he was doing the work. The whole of one side of the house was nearly finished, but on looking closely at it, the owner discovered that instead of an even surface of paint the wall was covered with a series of pictures. Somehow the rich man seemed to recognise all the pictures, and what ugly ones they all were! There was his son being turned out of the house, there was the little bare-walled cottage home where his son and family lived; another showed two boys with a small bundle of sticks in their hands being taken to prison, and a fourth, a poor woman seated on the roadside with a baby in her lap, a little boy standing at her side crying, and a broken bedstead and some chairs lying on the ground near them. Each picture showed some hard or cruel deed; and the rich man recognised himself, or his actions, in all of them. He turned angrily to the painter and asked him how he dared to paint all that rubbish on his wall. But the painter seemed not to hear him, and went on painting.

The rich man called his servants and ordered them to stop the painter's work. But they only stared, and said that they could see no pictures but only a well-painted wall. For they

were fairy paintings and could only be seen by the master. The rich man stormed and at last bade the painter leave off and go away. 'No,' was the answer, 'the bargain was that I should finish the work.' Next day the rich man came again. Two sides were now completed and the ugly pictures multiplied. On the third day the rich man again stood watching the work in progress, and at last spoke out again to the painter, but in a milder tone than before, telling him that he did not like the pictures, and asking him whether they could not be hidden away or covered over. 'No,' said the painter, 'but you may change them,' and then went on with his work. 'Change them, but how?' But there was no answer. The rich man thought of an old friend of his whom he had not seen for years, and to him he went with his story and to ask his advice. His friend listened to the rich man, and then said, 'Your house is large and lonely. Send for your son and family, and they will bring home-life into the place. That will be a beginning, and the rest you must think out for yourself.' The rich man turned homewards, and on his way met his rent collector. The tenant, Stevens, had not paid his rent for three weeks; what was to be done? 'Turn the man out of the house——' began the rich man, but then he stopped as he thought of another ugly picture on his house wall. 'No,' he said, 'let the man have time; the harvest this year has been a bad one, and we must not be hard on

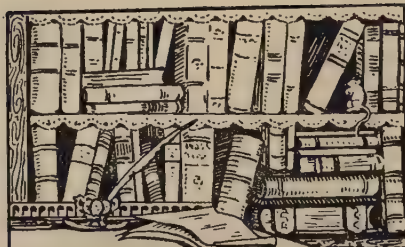
Stevens.' The bailiff stared at his master, and the more so when he received orders to find out where the woman had gone, who had been turned out of her cottage a few weeks ago, and to let her come in again.

Then the rich man hastened home to prepare the house to receive his son and family. They came, and with the children there seemed to come brightness and cheerfulness into the big house. The rich man's speech and conduct softened towards his servants, and the neighbours soon noticed the change that had come over him, and wondered what had brought it about.

The rich man went out to see the painter again, and could see that a change was also taking place in the pictures. His own likeness was shown less stern, and sometimes children were pictured walking by his side with their hands in his. There was still a portion of wall to be covered, but the improvement that had been going on seemed to promise that the space would become beautiful to look at, when filled in with pictures of the happy family home-life that was now to be seen within the walls of the once almost deserted mansion.

I hope that we all have or shall have bright pictures to look back at, pleasant pictures of home, of school, of friendly help given or received. The painting is to a great extent in our own hands, and may be made ugly or beautiful according to what we do, and how we act towards one another

ION PRITCHARD.



The Editor's Bookshelf.

II.—BOOKS FOR MORAL TEACHING.

OUR Sunday school teachers often ask for some book which will help them to give lessons on moral duties. One of the following may perhaps supply just what they want.

Let us begin with the little ones. The printer has an excellent book now in his hands which may, I hope, be in that of our readers by the time Christmas has come. It is *Do the Right*, by Alice L. Colfox. The lessons are headed, Be Truthful, Be Kind, Be Industrious, etc.; and each one deals with its subject thoroughly in a simple, interesting style. There is a little poem, a chat, one or two anecdotes, and finally, a story in large print, for the children to 'read round.' For the younger classes, this ought to be a delightful 'helper.'

Lessons for Little Boys, by Mary Dendy (price 2d.), is a suggestive booklet for teachers. It begins by a lesson on 'Why attend Sunday school?' and then others follow on

Courage, Obedience, Truth, Kindness, and Industry.

In the Home, by W. C. Gannett (price 3d.), will supply texts for many a simple chat on duties in connection with home-life. Reference is made to the sweetness of home, and our duties to father, mother, sisters, brothers, and other relatives and friends, including our four-footed ones. To parents and teachers willing to devote some thought to their lesson, this little work will be very acceptable.

Our American friends have also published three other books that have been found of service in some of our schools; these are *Rights and Duties*, by K. G. Wells (6d. net); *Character Lessons*, by G. H. Young (6d. net); and *The Citizen and the Neighbour* (1s. 6d. net). This last is quite for adult scholars, and in the hands of a competent teacher, will prove most useful. One class of young men, I know, has recently gone through it with much enjoyment. Some of the questions propounded were not easy to answer, and here and there a variety in the laws and customs described, pointing to the difference between life here and life in the United States; but with a friendly Class Leader at hand to explain matters, these things only served to increase the interest in the subject. When one realises how important it is for our young men and young women to understand their duties of citizenship—the larger family to which they belong,—it must be a matter for congratulation when this subject is care-

fully and reverently handled in our senior classes.

Successful Life, by John Dendy (2/- net), is just being brought out, and will certainly be welcomed by teachers of senior lads and young men. It deals with those things which go to make life a real success, in the highest sense of the term.

In the above list we have books suited to all scholars, from the youngest to the eldest. But it will be well, also, to mention a few more which treat of this subject in story-form; which may either be taken by themselves or else may be used to supplement and illustrate the teacher's lesson.

Again beginning with the youngest classes, and working upwards, I would like to recommend—

Lesson Stories for the Little Ones, by Mary Dendy (price 1s.).

Home Counsels, by Gertrude Martineau (price 1s.).

New Parables and Stories, by David Macrae (price 1s. net).

Short Stories for the Sunday School and Home, edited by W. Copeland Bowie (price 1s. net).

With a story chosen from any of the above books to illustrate the lesson, especially if carefully read through beforehand, teachers will not find the lesson hour either dull or unprofitable.

“BEFORE I was six years old, I was erudite in that primitive literature, in which the legends of all nations are traced to

a common fountain—*Puss in Boots*, *Tom Thumb*, *Fortunio*, *Fortunatus*, *Jack the Giant Killer*—tales like proverbs, equally familiar, under different versions, to the infant worshipper of Buddha and the hardier children of Thor. I may say, without vanity, that in an examination in those venerable classics, I could have taken honours!”

“My dear mother had some little misgivings as to the solid benefit to be derived from such fantastic erudition, and timidly consulted my father thereon.

“My love,” answered my father, in that tone of voice which always puzzled even my mother to be sure whether he was in jest or earnest, “in all these fables, certain philosophers could easily discover symbolical significations of the highest morality. I have myself written a treatise to prove that *Puss in Boots* is an allegory upon the progress of the human understanding, having its origin in the mystical schools of the Egyptian priests, and evidently an illustration of the worship rendered at Thebes and Memphis to those feline quadrupeds, of which they made both religious symbols and elaborate mummies.”

“My dear Austin,” said my mother, opening her blue eyes, “you don’t think that Sisty will discover all those fine things in *Puss in Boots*!”

“My dear Kitty,” answered my father, “you don’t think, when you were good enough to take up with me, that you found in me all the fine things I have learned from books. You knew me only as a harmless creature, who was happy enough to please your fancy. By and by you discovered that I was no worse for all the quartos that have transmigrated into ideas within me—ideas that are mysteries even to myself. If Sisty can’t discover all the wisdom of Egypt in *Puss in Boots*, what then? *Puss in Boots* is harmless, and it pleases his fancy. All that wakes curiosity is wisdom, if innocent—all that pleases the fancy now, turns hereafter to love or to knowledge.”

LYTTON.—‘*The Caxtons*.’

SUNDAY SCHOOL ANNIVERSARY SERVICE.

COMPOSED & ARRANGED BY MAUD E. TURNER.

Opening Anthem—Praise ye the Lord.

Slowly. f *p*

Praise ye the Lord, all ye na-tions! Praise Him, all ye peo-ple, for His

f *p*

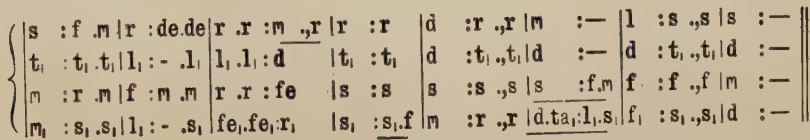
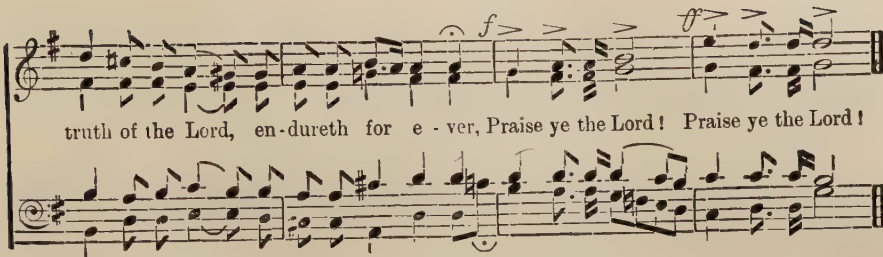
KEY G. { $\begin{array}{l} \bar{d} : \bar{d} : \bar{d} : \bar{d} : \bar{r} : \bar{r} : \bar{m} : \bar{d} : | : \bar{f} : - : \bar{f} : \bar{f} : \bar{d} : \bar{m} : \bar{m} : | : \bar{m} : \bar{m} : \end{array}$ }
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mf *rall.*

mer-ci-ful kindness, His merciful kindness is great t'ward us, and the truth of the Lord, the

rall.

{ $\begin{array}{l} l_1 : l_1 : l_1 : t_1 : d : d : d : t_1 : t_1 : d : r : m : m : m : l_1 : l_1 : | se_1 : l_1 : l_1 : f : m : r : d : t_1 : r : \end{array}$ }
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 $\begin{array}{l} f_1 : f_1 : r_1 : d_1 : d_1 : m_1 : s_1 : f_1 : m_1 : r_1 : d_1 : l_1 : l_1 : f_1 : r_1 : m_1 : l_1 : l_1 : f_1 : fe_1 : fe_1 : s_1 : s_1 : f_1 : \end{array}$ }

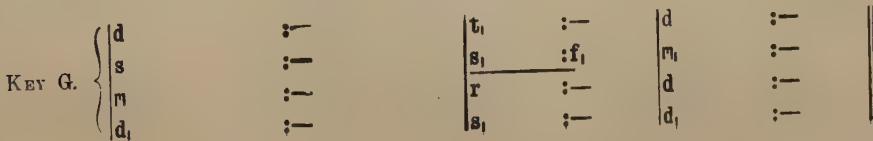
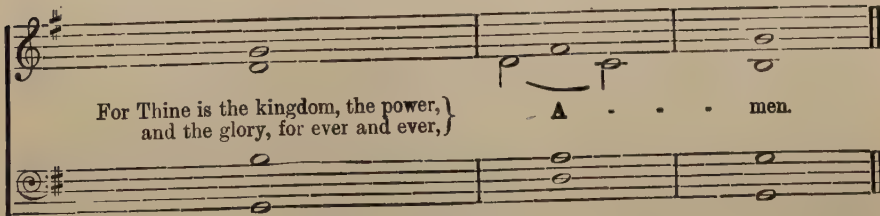


The Lord's Prayer (*By Minister and Congregation*).

OUR Father, which art in heaven;
hallowed be thy name; Thy
kingdom come; Thy will be done on
earth as it is in heaven. Give us this

day our daily bread, and forgive us our
trespasses as we forgive them that tres-
pass against us; and lead us not into
temptation, but deliver us from evil.

(To be sung as Doxology).



Hymn.—Father who lovest us.

F. W. TURNER.

f *mf*

1. Fa-ther, who lov-est us, Hear us, Thy children, when we cry!

f *mf*

KEY D. $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} s : s : s d' , s : s : s : m : f s : s : t : - l r : - : \\ s : s : s d' , s : s : m : d : r m : d : - d d : t_1 : \\ s : s : s d' , s : s : d' : d' : d' d' : d' : - d' s : - : \\ s : s : s d' , s : s : d : d : d d : d : f : - fe s : - : \end{array} \right\}$

p

Fa-ther, who lov-est us, Help, or we die! Pi-ty our weakness, and

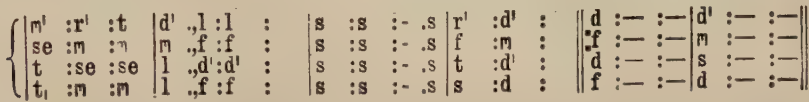
p

$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} s : s : s r' , d' : d' : t : l - l s : - : t : - d' : r' r' : d' : s \\ s : s : s r' , d' : d' : s : s fe s : - : f : - f : f f : m : m \\ s : s : s r' , d' : d' : r' : r' - d' t : - : r' : - d' : t t : d' : d \\ s : s : s r' , d' : d' : r : r r s : - : s : - s : s d : d : d \end{array} \right\}$

mf

suc-cour us e-ver; Fa-ther, we cry to Thee, Thou failest ne-ver.

$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} t : - d' : r' r' : d' : d' : d' : t : l s : - f : m f : r : s f : m : \\ f : - f : f f : m : m : s : f m : - r : d r : r : r r : d : \\ r' : - d' : t t : d' : d' : d' : d' : - d' : d' l : t : t t : d' : \\ s_1 : - s_1 : s_1 s_1 : d : d : d : d : - d : d f_1 : s_1 : s_1 s_1 : l_1 : \end{array} \right\}$



2. O Thou most holy God,
Oft though we wander from thy way;
Call us in mercy back,
Whene'er we stray!
Save us, forgive us, and guide Thou us
ever!
Father, we cry to Thee, etc.
3. Still as our years increase,
And sorrow's waves above us roll,
Father of love and peace,
Keep Thou our soul!
Teach us to trust Thee. and rest in
Thee ever!
Father, we cry to Thee, etc.
4. Many glad days and bright
We of thy mercy would implore,
Help us to do the right,
Still more and more!
Save us from evil, and bless Thou us
ever!
Father, we cry to Thee, etc.

Amen,

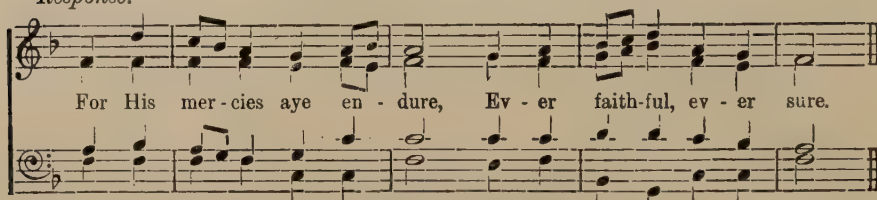
Psalm and Response.

The verses to be read or intoned by the minister, or by a few voices in unison. If intoned, the harmonies to be used will be found on the next page.

Minister.—

1. Let us with a gladsome mind
Praise the Lord, for He is kind.

Response.—



KEY F

d : l	s . f : m	r : m . f	m : —	r : m	f . s : l	m : r	d : —
d : d	d : d	t ₁ : d . t ₁	d : —	r : d	r . m : f	d : t ₁	d : —
m : f	m . r : d	r : s	s : —	s : s	l : l	s : f	m : —
d : d	d : d	s ₁ : s ₁	d : —	t ₁ : d	f ₁ : r ₁	s ₁ : s ₁	d : —

Minister.—

2. Let us blaze his name abroad
For of gods He is the God.

Response.—For his mercies, etc.

Minister.—

3. Who by his wisdom did create
The painted heavens so full of state.

Response.—For his mercies, etc.

Minister.—

4. Who did the solid earth ordain
To rise above the watery plain.

Response.—For his mercies, etc.

Minister.—

5. Who by His all-commanding might
Did fill the new-made world with
light.

Response.—For his mercies, etc.

Minister.—

6. And caused the golden-tressed sun
All the day long his course to run.

Response.—For his mercies, etc.

Minister.—

7. The horned moon to shine by night
Amongst her spangled sisters bright.

Response.—For his mercies, etc.

Minister.—

8. All living creatures He doth feed,
And with full hand supplies their
need.

Response.—For his mercies, etc.

Minister.—

9. Let us therefore warble forth
His mighty majesty and worth,

Response.—For his mercies, etc.

If intoned, the following music to be used for verses 1, 2, 8 and 9—i.e. the two first and the two last verses.

Let us with a gladsome mind, Praise the Lord, for He is kind.

KEY F. { | d :— | 1, : t, | d :— ||

For verses 3 to 7.

Who by His wisdom did create the painted heavens so full of state.

{ | d :— | d : t, | 1, :— ||

READING (*Mrs. Barbauld*).

Minister.—

BEHOLD the shepherd of the flock; he taketh care for his sheep, he leadeth them among clear brooks, he guideth them to fresh pasture; if the young lambs are weary he carrieth them in his arms; if they wander, he bringeth them back.

But who is the shepherd's Shepherd? who taketh care for him? who guideth him in the path he should go? and if he wander, who shall bring him back?

Response.—

God is the shepherd's Shepherd; He is the Shepherd over all; He taketh care for all; the whole earth is his fold; we are all his flock; and every herb and every green field is the pasture which He hath prepared for us.

Minister.—

The mother loveth her little child; she bringeth it up on her knees; she nourisheth its body with food; she feedeth its mind with knowledge; if it is sick, she nurseth it with tender love;

she watcheth over it when asleep; she forgetteth it not for a moment; she teacheth it how to be good; she rejoiceth daily in its growth.

But who is the parent of the mother? who nourisheth her with good things, and watcheth over her with tender love, and remembereth her every moment? Whose arms are about her to guard her from harm? and if she is sick, who shall heal her?

Response.—

God is the parent of the mother. He is the parent of all, for He created all. All the men and all the women, who are alive in the wide world, are his children: He loveth all, He is good to all.

Minister.—

The king governeth his people; he hath a golden crown upon his head,

and the royal sceptre is in his hand; he sitteth upon a throne, and sendeth forth his demands; his subjects fear before him; if they do well, he protecteth them from danger; and if they do evil, he punisheth them.

But who is the Sovereign of the king? who commandeth him what he must do? whose hand is reached out to protect him from danger? and if he doeth evil, who shall punish him?

Response.—

God is the Sovereign of the king: His crown is of rays of light, and his throne is amongst the stars. He is King of kings and Lord of Lords; if He biddeth us live, we live; and if He biddeth us die, we die; His dominion is over all worlds, and the light of his countenance is upon all his works.

(All Sing).

God is our Shep-herd, there-fore we will fol-low him;

KEY G

s ₁	:-	l ₁	:t ₁	d	:-	d	:-	r	:r	r	:m	r	:-	d	d	:-
s ₁	:-	s ₁	:s ₁	s ₁	:-	s ₁	:-	s ₁	:s ₁	t ₁	:t ₁	t ₁	:-	d	s ₁	:-
t ₁	:-	d	:r	d	:-	m	:-	f	:f	f	:f	f	:-	m	m	:d
s ₁	:-	s ₁	:f ₁	m ₁	:-	d	:-	t ₁	:t ₁	s ₁	:s ₁	d	:-	d	d ₁	:m ₁

God is our Fa - ther, there - fore we will love him;

{	¹ m : - fe : se	l : - l : -	t : t t : d	t : - . l l : -
	¹ m : - m : m	m : - m : -	m : m se : se	se : - . l m : -
	^d se : - l : t	l : - d : -	r : r r : r	r : - . d d : l
	¹ m : - m : r	d : - l : -	se : se m : m	l : - . l ₁ : d

God is our King,..... God is our King,..... God is our

{	s : - l : t	^d f : - l ₁ : -	fe : - fe : fe	s : - l ₁ : -	se : - se : se
	s : - s : s	^d d : - l ₁ : -	l ₁ : - l ₁ : l ₁	s ₁ : - t ₁ : -	t ₁ : - t ₁ : t ₁
	r : - r : r	^d f : - d : -	r : - r : r	r : - l ₁ : -	m : - m : m
	t ₁ : s ₁ s : f	^m l ₁ : - f ₁ : -	r ₁ : - r : d	t ₁ : - s ₁ : -	m ₁ : - m : r

King,..... There - fore we will o - - bey..... him.

{	l : - l ₁ : l	f : m : r	d : - l ₁ : -	t ₁ : - l ₁ : -	d : - l ₁ : -
	l ₁ : - d : -	r : r	l ₁ : l ₁ : l ₁	s ₁ : - l ₁ : -	s ₁ : - l ₁ : -
	m : - l ₁ : -	r : r	r : r : r	m : - l ₁ : -	s : - f : -
	d : - l ₁ : -	f ₁ : f ₁	r ₁ : m ₁ : f ₁	s ₁ : - l ₁ : -	s ₁ : - l ₁ : -

Hymn.—With happy voices ringing.

J. W. ALLEN.

With hap - py voic - es ring - ing, Thy child - ren, Lord, ap - pear, Their

KEY G

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joy - ous prais - es bringing, In anthems sweet and clear. For skies of gold - en

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splen - dour, For a - zure roll - ing sea, For blos - soms sweet and

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ten - der, O Lord, we wor - ship thee, A - - - men.

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se ₁	l ₁	—	f ₁	m ₁	r ₁	r ₁	s ₁	s ₁	d ₁	—	—	f ₁	—	—	d ₁	—	—	—

2. *p* What though no eye beholds Thee,
 No hand thy hand may feel,
cres Thy universe unfolds Thee,
 Thy starry heavens reveal.
mf The earth and all its glory
 Our homes and all we love,
f Tell forth the wondrous story
 Of One who reigns above.

3. *f* And shall we not adore Thee
 With more than joyous song,
 And live in truth before Thee,
 All beautiful and strong?
 Lord, bless our souls' endeavour
cres Thy servants true to be,
ff And through all life, for ever,
 To live our praise to Thee.—*Amen.*
W. G. Tarrant.

PRAYER.

OUR Heavenly Father, our Shepherd and our King! we are gathered here to-day to thank Thee for all the blessings that Thou hast showered upon us, and to seek strength to do thy will in the work to which Thou callest us.

Father! we thank Thee for our homes; bless all who love us and all whom we love. Help each one of us, we pray Thee, to remember that the happiness of home is largely in our own keeping; help us to set a watch upon our lips, so that the hasty word may not be spoken; and so to guard our thoughts that unkindness may find no entrance into our hearts.

May the blessing of thy love rest

upon this, our school; may we strive to learn more and more of Thy will so that we may follow Thee in our daily life as the sheep follow the good shepherd.

We thank Thee for all the good men and women who have taught us, by their example, the beauty of a pure and noble life; and especially for Jesus our Great Teacher, who showed us how helpful and how strong is he who trusteth in Thee. May we strive to go about doing good, even as he did; and may we learn to trust Thee with a perfect love; for then, like him, we shall look upon our joys and sorrows as thy messengers, and shall learn to accept thankfully and bear patiently whatever Thou shalt send.—*Amen.*

Anthem.

The Lord is my Shepherd.

Slowly. p

The Lord is my Shep-herd, I shall not want; The Lord my

KEY F {

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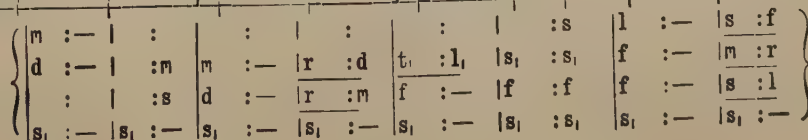
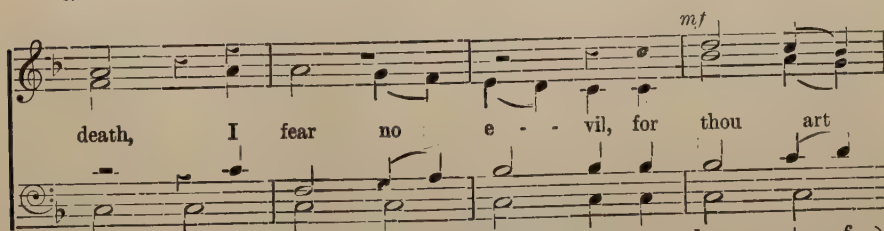
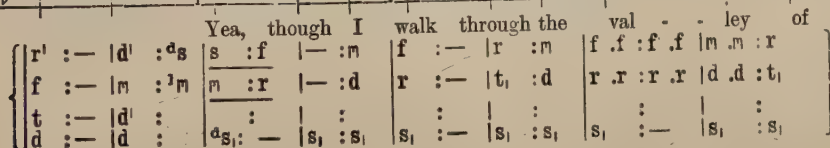
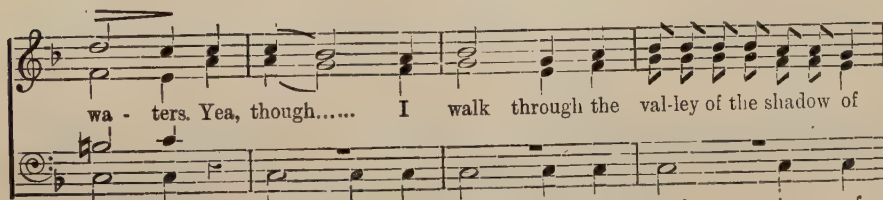
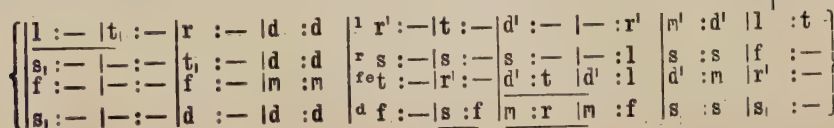
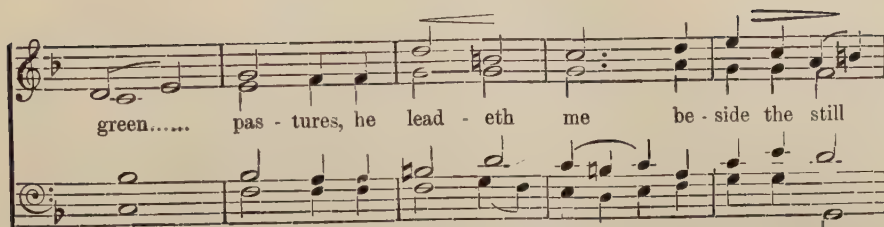
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Shep-herd is, I shall not want..... He ma-keth me to lie down in

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with me, Thy rod, thy staff, they com - fort me. The Lord is my

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Shep - herd, I shall not want, I shall not want.

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READING (*Isaiah* lv.).

HO, everyone that thirsteth come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? And your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear and come unto me, hear and your soul shall live. Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God for he will abundantly pardon.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the

heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I send it. For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

Lord of our Life.

C. H. PURDAY, by permission.

Lord of our life! whose love from year to year, Lights

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up our way; Speak to our heart, and

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tell us thou art near, In child-hood's day;

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And though, like rain-bow tints, bright hours may fly, Thy

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care, thy pow'r, thy truth can ne-ver die A - - men.

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2. How many blessings has thy constant
care
Around us cast!
No bliss, no grief, but Thou wert with us
there
From first to last;
For health, and home, and friends, and
wisdom's store,
For all, O Lord! thy goodness we adore.
3. Thou hast been with us, Father! all our
life,
Though we forgot;
Still in the days of manly toil and strife
Forsake us not!
O! give us strength thy holy will to do,
And stand to faith and duty bravely true!
4. Lord, hear the prayer, so often prayed
before,
That we may know
The debt of love to Christ, who came of
yore,
Thy children owe;
Him would we follow whatsoe'er betide,
And gladly trust our faithful Shepherd
guide.
5. Lord of our life! how bright, how full,
how clear
Thy mercies shine!
Keep in thy love, so constant, and so
dear,
Our lives all Thine!
And be that love that lights our morning
prime
Proclaimed no less in life's soft vesper
chime!—*Amen.*

A. N. Blatchford.

Address.

Hymn.—Now thank we all our God.

GERMAN CHORALE.

Now thank we all our God, With hearts and hands and voices, Who

Key G {

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m	r	m	f	f	m	—	—	s	f	s	s	s	f	—	m	m
d	s	d	f, s, l, f	f	d	—	—	d	l	d	s	d	s	—	d	d

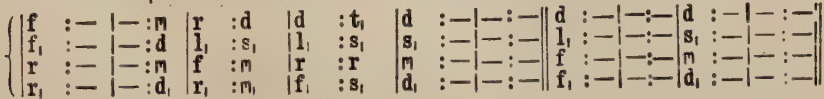
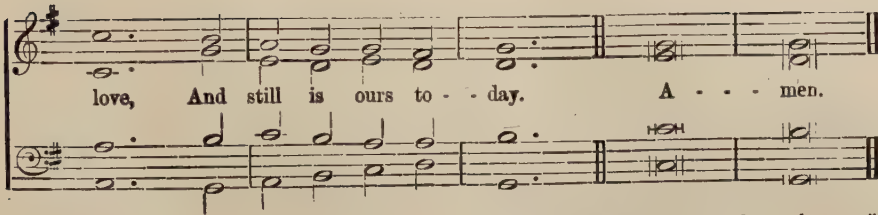
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won-drous things hath done, In whom his world re - joic - es; Who

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from our mo - thers' arms Hath blessed us on our way, With countless gifts of

r	r	m	m	r	—	—	r	m	s	s	fe	s	—	—	s	l	s	f	m	
l	t	d	d	t	—	—	t	d	r	d	l	s	—	—	d	d	ta	l	s	
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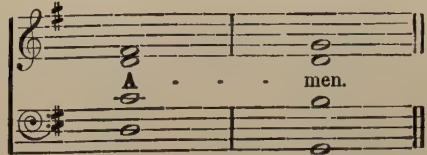


(All voices in unison).

ff 2. All praise and thanks to God
 The Father now be given;
 We lift our hearts to Him
 Who reigns in highest heaven;
 The One Eternal God,
 Whom earth and heaven adore;
 Who was of old, is now,
 And shall be evermore.—*Amen*.

Benediction.—

The Lord bless and keep us; may He
 be gracious unto us; and give us peace
 now and for evermore.—*Amen*.



Seeking Fruit.

A FEW WORDS TO THOSE ABOUT TO ENTER
ON LIFE'S WORK.¹



TOWN-BRED people, especially if their town is a crowded one, and land so scarce in it that gardens are rare, miss a great deal that is interesting in connection with trees and plants of all kinds. Some of us who dress ourselves smartly, and are in many ways sharpened by living with sharp and bustling folks, might learn a lesson of humility if we spent a few days with a farmer or a farmer's man. At first we might be disposed to think ourselves superior to our rural host; but if we really had the wisdom to ask questions, he could soon inform us respecting a hundred things about which our ignorance is, perhaps, as dense as a city fog.

For instance, there are the kinds of grain,—wheat, barley, oats, rye, millet; the kinds of clover and other fodder, including the kinds of turnip-like roots; and the kinds of soil and culture suitable to each. Then there are the kinds of fruit-trees—the different sorts of apple-trees alone would make a pretty good morning's lesson. Probably some of us would be disposed to turn aside the thought of our ignorance by some feeble joke about preferring to eat the apples instead of growing them. It would be a feeble joke, indeed, as anyone could see who realised

that simply to eat things is after all a part that the lowest sort of creatures can play; while to be able to produce a crop is the part of one who has wisdom and who uses it. A pig lives to eat, the wise man eats to live; and the highest life is the life that yields most fruit.

One thing we may learn in a short ramble at any time of the year, is that all natural growths point onward to fruit according to their kind. In the sticky chestnut buds are enfolded soft, woolly leaves, surrounding a tiny, woolly spire of blossom, months before the sunshine and winds of March and April unloose the scaly sheathes, and bring leaf and flower to the light of day. Scarcely perceptible, or at least easily unnoticed, are the tiny flowers of the holly, waxen-white, clustered at the foot of the leaf; but there they are in Spring preparing for the red berries of Christmas. On the hazel-bushes one sees the long, green catkins hanging in late November and December. So many trees have shed their foliage by that time, that you cannot walk in the lanes or woods without noticing this fringe of green tassels. But they have not sprung there all at once. As far back as August they were to be seen among the leaves, pushing forth hard and strong, making ready for next year's nuts before this year's nuts were ripe enough to gather. These are but the readiest illustrations of a universal method in nature. To grow always implies pointing forward to some stage to come, and this when

¹ This address might be appropriately used in the School Anniversary Service if there are young people present about to become teachers.

reached still points on. You cannot really draw a line between Spring and Summer, or between Summer and Autumn. All is linked together; and if the farmer's wisdom is enough to enable him to take advantage of this continual pushing forward of life in regard to plants, shall we not aim at a similar wisdom in regard to our own lives?

See how soon some lives,—most lives, we may hope,—begin to show fruit. It is sometimes a matter of necessity; as, for instance, where the eldest child has to begin early to depend less upon its parents, and rather to assist them in attending to the younger children. Sometimes it is more a matter of beautiful choice, as when the young maiden thoughtfully anticipates the desires or needs of her elders, and, without being bidden do this or that, voluntarily puts her happy self at the service of the happy mother or other friend. Sometimes a father is delighted to find his boys gradually waking up to the consciousness that it is a little bit mean to be always taking from him, not only the means of subsistence, but the strength that goes out of a man through constant cares and worries. He sees one and another growing more thoughtful and less exacting, and he is glad to notice how manly they are getting; how, while they are merry and gamesome, they can be earnest, too; and how these dearest plants of his are yielding good fruit already.

It is these signs of fruit that make

the veterans content to trust God for the future. If young lives are abounding in such good promise, the old ones can get ready, like old Simeon in the Gospel story, to 'depart in peace.' The aged General knows, or hopes at least, that young officers whom he trained, will serve their country as faithfully as he has done. The old writer of books thinks with satisfaction of the future of English literature, if only he recognises new and rising stars of genius around him. In one of his last poems Tennyson pictures himself as 'Old Merlin,' who must soon pass away; and his parting word to all young writers whom he is leaving is, 'Follow the Gleam,' *i.e.*, pursue the brightest, the best, the noblest, the manliest ideal. If our country had not always been rich in young lives ready and willing to take up the work begun by their fathers and elders, its history, instead of being a glorious one, would have been a record of failures.

So we teachers come 'seeking fruit,' not expecting to find it ripe in Spring-time, but hoping to see signs of it, and to know that it will be there in its fullness, when we leave off our teaching, and pass on to the greater School of the Future. We ask you young people whether you will do your part in the endeavour to become wise enough, kind enough, manly and womanly enough, to help the world in your turn. Some of you are becoming teachers already. Welcome! There is no happier work in the world than helping other souls to live. Some of you are

becoming workers in other good ways.
Welcome! The 'Lord of the Harvest'
will count you amongst his fellow-
labourers, and you shall have your part
in his joy at the last.

W. G. TARRANT.

The Vision of David Joris.

NAY, but listen, neighbour, pray—
Once a Flemish seer,
David Joris, so they say
Saw, in trance, appear
Kings and knights in great array ;
Through his twilit painting room
Stalk the sombre host,
Priests and prelates grandly loom—
Everyone a ghost,
Silent as the silent gloom.

Very sad and overworn,
Pale and very old,
Look the solemn brows that mourn
Under crowns of gold,
Grown too heavy to be borne.

Kings and priests, and all so grey,
All so faint and wan,
Drifting past in still array,
Ever drifting on,
Till at length he saw them stay.

Saw a second vision rise
Through the twilit air,
Heard what laughter and lispings cries,
Saw what tumbled hair,
Rosy limbs and rounded eyes!

Playing children—much the same
As we see them here,
Laughing in the merry game—
Rose before him clear ;
But they clove the dust like flame.

Heeding not the ghostly throng,
David heard them sing ;
At the echo of their song
Saw each ghostly king
Lift his eyes, look hard and long.

Till at length, as when a breeze
Bends the rushes well,
Captains, kings, great sovereignties,
Bent, and bowed, and fell,
Kneeling all upon their knees.

Laying at the children's feet
Each his kingly crown,
Each, the conquering power to greet,
Laying humbly down
Sword and sceptre, as is meet.

Then unkinged and dispossessed,
Rose the weary host,
Glad at last to cease and rest,
For to every ghost
Comes the time when peace is best.

Since our crowns must fall to them
When beyond our reach,
Falls our dearest diadem,
Neighbour, let us teach
Every child to prize the gem.

For, be sure, the new things grow
As the old things fade,
As we train the children, so
Is the future made
That shall reign when we are low.

All the work we would have wrought

Must by them be done ;

We shall pass, but not our thought ;

While in every one

Lives the lesson that we taught.

A. MARY F. ROBINSON.—

'The School Children.'

course of the boat was altered, and away it went in search of the drowning sailor, reaching him just in time to save him from sinking. Then the boat returned and was fortunately able to pick up the other one and to bring both safely on board.

'Take it in Detail.'

'One by one thy duties wait thee,
Let thy whole strength go in each.'

A. A. PROCTOR.

Illustrative Anecdotes.

'Others first.'

A SHIP was sailing on the Indian Seas. Most of the crew were busily employed on board putting on a fresh coat of paint. Two men were at work standing on a platform made of a plank fastened against the shipside. A sudden lurch of the vessel, and the rope fastening gave way, and both men were thrown into the water. Both sailors could fortunately swim and they struck out at once for the ship. A cry of 'man-overboard' was raised, and as soon as could be, the vessel was brought round and a boat lowered. Short as was the time required for this, the men were already nearly half a mile off and one of them was rapidly losing his strength. On came the boat at last, the officers directing its course to the man nearest to him. 'Pick up Bowman first. I can keep up a little longer,' shouted the struggling sailor, and directed the rescuers to his comrade drifting at some little distance off. The

THREE brothers were mounting a high mountain in Switzerland. They were used to climbing; but the path up which the guide was leading them became rougher and steeper, until towards the top it seemed almost impassable. Still it would soon be over, they thought; once at the top they should be safe; for there must certainly be an easier way by which they could go back. Judge of their dismay, then, when, having gained the top, they saw that on the other side it shelved down even more precipitately!

What was to be done? It seemed quite impossible that they could return either way in safety. 'Take it in detail,' said the eldest brother. This they steadfastly resolved to do; not to look at the long steep descent, but only on the point where the next footstep was to be planted; and so they passed from step to step, and achieved their dangerous journey without harm.

How many mountains of difficulty may be overcome in life, if we will only take them in detail.



IN his rounds the school visitor is not infrequently asked as to the best method of dismissal at the close of the afternoon's work. The question is by no means an easy one to decide. In small schools a quiet, informal method, whereby the children 'ooze' gradually away, some going at once and others staying to chat with their teachers, has a very good effect, but with large numbers this plan is apt to lead to confusion.

It always seems to me that, except in small schools, the classes should go out in regular order, one after the other. When once this order is really understood, there is no need to call out the classes, but the first one will be led forth by the teacher at a sign from the superintendent, the rest following in turn. Outside the door the teacher can stop and quietly shake hands, giving the kindly 'good-bye' to each one of his class; and in this way the school is dispersed in good order and in a very short time. Of course there must be a settled place for any children who are waiting for brothers or sisters to stand, but that is easily arranged for.

Another plan is for a hymn to be sung by the children while leaving. In some schools this is considered very effective, but in others the method has been tried and abandoned, because of the difficulty of keeping up a sufficiently strong body of sound when half the children have left. This objection has been overcome in certain schools by having a small teachers' choir, which continues to sing all the time. A voluntary on organ or harmonium is played sometimes, both at dismissal and when the classes are assembling after opening services.

There is one great objection, in my opinion, to the children's singing while leaving the school. Of course we all know very well that boys and girls, as well as 'grown-ups,' do not *always* think of the words, either in hymn or prayer. But we *want* them to do so; and therefore we ought surely to be careful not to give them a hymn to sing when they will probably have to leave off in the middle. To let them use it as a musical sound only, as a mere accompaniment, to be left off in arbitrary fashion, is surely to destroy its chief value. We should never like

to use a prayer in that way ; and should not such aspirations, whether sung or said, be treated in the same spirit ?

This reference to hymns reminds me of another note made in my book, after a visit to one of our schools. The want of a proper supply of hymn books is so often apparent ; why should not each child possess one of its very own ? In some schools, when the scholar has fulfilled the regulations necessary in order to be on the permanent register, he is formally presented with a hymn book by the superintendent ; this seems to me to be an excellent method, and the expense is very trifling.

But teachers say 'That is all very well ; but even then it doesn't get over the difficulty. The boys and girls are constantly forgetting to bring their book with them, and then it is lost.' Granted, it is a difficulty ; but the difficulty may be overcome, if we think it *worth while*. If every teacher will make a point of his scholars bringing their hymn books they will soon be brought more regularly ; and if *now* and again the superintendent will call for all, who have books, to hold them up, and then say a few words to the delinquents, it is surprising how much more careful the children are to bring them next time.

Some teachers cover the books, or help their scholars to do so, with a pretty coloured linen or paper ; this makes them take pride in their book,

and gives to it an individuality which is always pleasant.

But the greatest help of all is to be found in the hymn book being used by each child in its own class each Sunday, —then it naturally sees *the use* of having it, and that will result in the *desire*, at least, not to forget.

It is sometimes said that children find learning hymns every Sunday a wearisome task, and very often it is made so, I fear. If, however, the teacher will try the effect of giving a quiet five minutes to his class (and to himself) so that all may learn one verse of the *same* hymn for the following Sunday, it will be good for his class, and he will also have provided himself with a text for the next Sunday's lesson. And it is curious, if one has a definite thought in one's mind, how odd scraps of conversation, or of what we read, come in to illustrate and amplify our text.

When this has been done, the class, on assembling, should (no books being open) say the verse learnt on the previous Sunday, the teacher taking his turn with the scholars. The verse will lead naturally to a few words on its subject and, very often, this will really form the lesson for the day.

Some teachers think the scholars should learn a hymn or do other lessons during the week ; and, if these are not done, they withhold the good mark. This appears to me to be a

great mistake—for herein consists one of the differences between day and Sunday school. In both the true teacher will aim at the training of the mind and soul of the scholar; but while in the former it must necessarily deal more with teaching of knowledge,—training the mind,—in the latter it is the moral and religious principles,—those we are accustomed to associate with the soul,—that take the foremost place. Marks, therefore, in the Sunday school, may fitly be given for punctual attendance; because, without this, the scholar cannot get the benefit of the lesson; but marks should be more especially awarded for good behaviour, because this emphasizes the fact that right principle, as shown in right conduct, is the fundamental point of the Sunday school.

The Sunday School Savings Bank,

AND HOW MR. BERKLEY STARTED IT

(By our own Interviewer).



OR three long months I had been engaged in the difficult, well-nigh impossible task of attempting to convince the hard-hearted, unintelligent race of editors of my extraordinary qualifications for the post of interviewer; and when at last my superior merits were recognised by the only

common-sense editor it has been my good luck to meet, I must confess to having experienced considerable relief, mingled with a somewhat large amount of self-satisfaction.

I had been sitting biting my nails and trying to kick all the paint off the leg of a neighbouring table with a persistency worthy of a better cause, wishing that my chief would give me something to do, when the door of the dingy little office opened to admit a small boy with a smaller piece of paper containing the necessary instructions. I was to go and interview Mr. Berkley, the well-known superintendent of the Newton Street Sunday School, to learn how he manages his Sunday School Savings Bank, and to obtain useful hints for future bankers. I hailed a cab and told the man to drive to No. 3, Grey Church Street, the city office of Mr. Berkley, and, on arriving there, I rang the bell and made the usual inquiries. 'Third door on the right,' I was told; and with quaking heart I made bold to knock. 'Come in,' answered a cheery voice, and entering, I found my victim sitting amidst a pile of unopened letters. I immediately explained the object of my visit; but he, with the customary modesty of all great men, expressed a strong disinclination to being made public property, an objection that I had some difficulty in overcoming. However, when I pointed out the many and great benefits he would confer upon all my readers by his invaluable advice, I prevailed upon him to consent.

'Now,' said he, 'since I have fallen in with your desires, you must allow me to go to work my own way. I have a great objection to being cross-examined, and I think it would answer your purpose just as well, besides saving you the trouble of speaking, if I were to give you a short history of my bank.' I bowed assent. 'I presume you know that I have been superintendent of the Newton Street School for about thirty-five to forty years. Well, about twenty years ago, the thought entered my head that few things more useful, I may even say more suitable, could be taught in a Sunday school than the habit of saving. I had often thought with regret of the many pennies that every Sunday afternoon found their way into the cashbox of Mr. Jones, the sweet-stuff man round the corner, and had longed for some means of intercepting these small sums, whose useless expenditure brought so much additional trouble to the teacher; so that when the idea of a Savings Bank occurred to me, I seized upon it with joy.

'Upon the first favourable opportunity I gave a short address on the advantages of saving, at the same time telling the children that in future there would be a Savings Bank on a Sunday afternoon, to give an opportunity, to such as might desire, of putting by a penny or two each week. The following Sunday, accompanied by my daughter, aged fifteen, to act as banker, I opened my bank. I had come provided with thirty little pieces of cardboard ruled into

fifty-two small squares, one for each week of the year, and a line at the top for the name of the depositor. Each card was provided with an ordinary envelope, intended to perform two valuable services; firstly, to keep the card clean, and secondly, to provide some sort of purse to contain the amount to be entered on the card. This primitive form of bank-book answered its purpose very well. With these and a small cash-book I installed my daughter at the table, and sent to each class in turn for the would-be depositors. One by one they came; and, as each arrived, his or her name was written at the top of a card, together with a number to correspond with that in the ledger. This was also done on the outside of the envelope and on a line in the cash-book, surname first, Christian second. Next the amount of money paid in was entered on the card, and in the columns opposite the name in the cash-book. This process having been gone through in each case, the money was counted and the figures in the book added up; and we were both considerably elated on finding the two corresponded. The cards were then distributed, and at the end of school we wended our way home with light hearts, my little lassie firmly convinced that she was competent to fill the post of chief cashier of the Bank of England.

'It's so easy,' she explained, 'you have only got to write down a few names and add up a few figures, then it's all done.' 'Not so fast, not so fast,' I said, 'there's still a little more, but

that will do after tea.' I referred to the transcribing from the cash-book to the ledger, the value of which she did not at once see. So I had to show her that when a depositor wished to withdraw some money, it would be much simpler to go straightway to the ledger to compare the card entries with those in the cash-book in order to check the amounts, than to search the cash-book week by week, perhaps year by year. 'Moreover,' I said, 'supposing the cash-book should meet with some accident, say lose itself; then all chance of checking the entries would be gone for ever, were it not for the useful ledger. Accordingly after tea we set to work, and between us soon had it finished.

'Things went on thus very smoothly for some Sundays, our numbers being small, for I had taken the precaution to limit the bank to our school children; though afterwards, emboldened by success, we admitted their parents and close relatives. But, at last, one Sunday we failed to make the money tally with the book; we were twopence short. My daughter was in despair, and feeling in her pocket, she pulled out her purse, wishing to refund the missing sum. But I convinced her that such a proceeding would be as improper as unbusinesslike. Not having as yet returned the cards to their owners, we were enabled to compare each with the cash-book, when to our joy we found an entry of twopence on a card magnified to fourpence in the book. Appealing to the depositor we discovered that the card was correct; consequently

the mistake was easily and quickly rectified. Such mistakes always do happen at times, and always will, but with a little care they can easily be discovered, and that ancient proverb, 'Practice makes perfect,' can never be better exemplified than in the duties of a banker. At first mistakes were somewhat frequent, but as time went on they became rarer, and now they scarcely ever happen. My number of depositors increased from ten to twenty, and from twenty to thirty; and then I thought that we might indulge in rather more elaborate and printed cards, also in a cover that would stand rather more wear and tear than an ordinary envelope. Accordingly I had some cards printed about five inches by four inches, like this,—and Mr. Berkley showed me a card similar to the one reproduced on the next page.

'Further,' he continued, 'I had some strong, cloth-lined envelopes made with a large flap to prevent the money dropping out, and I made a charge of a half-penny for a card and a half-penny for a cover. This was really more than the actual cost, but the surplus went to paying for the cash-book, ledger, etc.; so that the bank was in no way dependent on charity, but entirely self-supporting. On the back of my cards I had printed notices of general interest, such as Mothers' Meetings every Wednesday, Band of Hope on Thursdays; together with a table of the rate of interest allowed. This interest was paid from that allowed by the Post Office Savings Bank into which I put

the money week by week. The average number of depositors is now about fifty-three per Sunday, a number which is steadily increasing; in fact, so large is it becoming that I am beginning to consider the advisability of getting two bankers.

‘To conclude, I will describe the routine of an ordinary Sunday afternoon as it now is. The banker arrives about a quarter to three, and stands at the

entrance of the big schoolroom, where the school assembles, to collect the cards as the children come in. When the doors are closed, he proceeds to a small room, where he places the cards in numerical order,—that is to say, according to the ledger numbers,—so as to facilitate the winding up at the end of each year, and in order that when transcribing from the cash-book, it shall not be necessary to turn from

No. Name of Depositor

189	WEEKS.					TOTAL.			REPAID.			
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	£	s.	d.	189	£	s.	d.
January.....												
February ...												
March												
April												
May												
June												
July												
August												
September..												
October... .												
November ..												
December ...												
	Interest.....											

Lines should also be ruled across the card, to divide it into chequered spaces.

one end of the ledger to the other,—next he deals with each in turn, entering the money first on the card, then in the cash-book. This done and the money found correct, the superintendent is asked to check the additions, and the cards are redistributed just before the closing service. Some schools, I believe, transact all banking work after the breaking up of school, but I cannot say that this method at all commends itself to me. The banker, on arriving home, enters the items in the ledger, and the work is completed. This is roughly what takes place every Sunday.

‘I think I have now told you all that is needful, but if there is any point that I have omitted or treated too lightly, pray tell me.’ ‘Many thanks,’ said I, ‘so far as I know there is only one thing you have left unsaid; you have not told me what form you go through in paying out money.’

‘Ah, that is very true. Any child wishing to withdraw money, even if it be only a penny or so, must give notice on the previous Sunday on a slip of paper to be placed in the cover, in order that the card entries may be compared with the ledger.’

‘Well, there doesn’t appear to be much difficulty in the Savings Bank. As your daughter said, it only means writing down a few names and adding up a few figures.’

Mr. Berkley laughed. ‘Look here, my friend; don’t run away with the idea that it is so easy, for all its simplicity. It “only” means that the

banker must be regular, accurate, careful of detail; and that when things go wrong,—as they will sometimes,—he must be well stocked with an unlimited supply of patience, good temper, and tact; ONLY that. Good morning.’

H. W.

Prayers for use in the Sunday School.



GOD, our Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for this day of life and joy that Thou hast given us. Many blessings are ours, and many are our hopes for the days to come; we cannot number them, and there is no need that we should count up our treasures; all we wish is to be able gratefully to remember that they come from Thee, and so to use all Thou sendest us that our lives may be made richer, and the world made better. Bless us now, as we meet together to think upon the things of the inner life; may our meditations serve to draw us nearer to each other, as we unite in common wonder and delight, and draw us nearer to Thee as we strive to make our own lives worthier of our heritage as thy children. Give us, we beseech Thee, willing hearts and receptive minds, so that all the good seed sown this hour may spring up and bear fruit abundantly in thy great harvest.—AMEN.

Teachers in Council

Music in our Sunday Schools.

I.



THE above title and 'Hymn Singing' are apt to be considered synonymous and to a large extent justly, as the latter is no doubt the most important musical item in the school programme.

The greatest beauty of hymn singing is attained when the fullest expression of the words is given; therefore the most important point of all is the choice of the hymn itself. The thoughts and expression of the hymns chosen must be sufficiently simple. If we give the children words to sing which they cannot feel or appreciate, we must not be surprised if they mumble or shout.

The tune should lend itself exactly to the words and help their expression; so that any scholar (who knows the tune by ear) can sing the hymn beautifully, by only thinking of *what* he is singing, and never once consciously, considering the *how*.

The children will naturally sing best what they enjoy most, and fortunately in this case, what they enjoy most is the thing best fitted for them. The

majority of children like bright, lively tunes, such as would naturally accompany cheerful words; and surely songs of hope, joy, and praise are best fitted for those who are just beginning life's journey. It may well be left to maturer voices to sing in a minor key of repentance and sadness.

'Should an instrument be used?' is a question often asked. To judge by the practice of our schools it is most frequently answered in the affirmative. The advisability of using an instrument for the church service is seldom doubted, and many of the same reasons apply to its use in school. It certainly lessens the chance of a break or hitch in the music of the opening or closing service and helps to avoid *contretemps*, which may be sore temptations to lively children.

When a new tune has to be learned it is a different case, then the school is turned into a singing class; it is important that every fault *should* be noticed, and a capable teacher will no doubt manage best without accompaniment. There is also scope for the use of an instrument in calming and smoothing what are often inclined to be the troubled waters of dismissal.

M. T.

II.

This subject can scarcely be treated apart from the larger one, of which it forms a portion, of our Sunday School Services.

The opening and closing services of our schools seldom receive the attention they deserve, little or no attempt being made to improve or develop them. This is a great mistake, as the opportunity afforded by the presence of the whole of our scholars should be fully taken advantage of. I think it would be good for us all if we tried more to make our schools our *children's churches*. I often think that if the pains, that are taken to persuade our children to attend regularly our church services, (in which it is too much to expect them to take more than a languid interest, or to receive more than a limited amount of benefit from them) were devoted to supplying them in their schools with a service specially arranged for them, the results might be more satisfactory both to teachers and children.

At all events we might easily make our Sunday school services brighter, more varied and more attractive to our scholars; we might spend more time in selecting words and tunes for the hymns, to see that they are really suitable for the youngest of our scholars, in order that each and all may take part in singing them.

Almost all children delight in singing, and in nothing have we a better opportunity of developing in our child-

ren's minds a sense of their dependence on each other and on their heavenly Father; of the duty of giving thanks with heart and voice for the blessings we enjoy in common; than in the singing of hymns and choruses in which each and all can join.

I would, therefore, extend the services, especially the opening service, by additional hymns, or, better still, by a form of service specially arranged, with selections from appropriate psalms, and prayers, with responses by the children (sung if possible). In addition to this, which might form part of the weekly meetings of our schools, I would more frequently have special musical services, when the whole of the time might be taken up in this manner, and, if possible, reference made, in a short address, to the hymns which have been sung.

In order to improve the quality of our singing, every Sunday school should have its singing-class, to meet during the week for the rehearsal of the musical portion of the services, and either to form the school choir, or, by their presence among the other scholars and their knowledge of the tunes, to give stability to the singing, and assistance to those who are not so well acquainted with the music.

It would be well also, with a view to encourage part-singing, to supply any scholar who has any knowledge of music, and is able to sing alto, tenor, or bass, with a copy of the Tune-book.

The hymns and tunes to be sung at the services should be in the hands

of the class at the previous meeting for rehearsal.

It would seem almost an unnecessary stipulation that every scholar should be provided with a hymn-book, but the writer has often seen much disorder and inconvenience caused by the inadequate number of books. Each teacher might make it a personal matter to see that his or her scholars have hymn-books, and when the number available is insufficient, to impress on the school officials the necessity of the deficiency being remedied.

All this entails more work on the part of superintendents, teachers, and others; but to my mind united effort on their part would have such a satisfactory effect on the singing and the services generally, that they would feel amply repaid for the extra trouble involved.

Services are now in use in some schools, some having been specially prepared, and to meet the wants of other schools, the Manchester District Sunday School Association has published a form of service, which can be used in its entirety or divided into shorter services. This can be obtained at Essex Hall, or from Messrs. Rawson and Co., Manchester, and will at least serve to show the idea I have in mind.¹

ISAAC BARROW.

III.

The previous remarks appear to have dealt principally with the singing

among the younger scholars in our Sunday schools. The importance of continuing our efforts in this direction as the children grow older must be clear to everyone. It has been said that the children take a delight in singing. This also applies to the boys and girls just growing out of childhood. And, in fact, for them, singing forms one of the most healthy recreations they can have after their week of hard work.

To encourage the elder ones to learn really good music for the Sunday service is an aim which should help to solve the problem of keeping our elder scholars. The capital training given at the Board schools renders the learning of the different parts comparatively easy; and even the boys after a few years are quite ready to attempt the bass and tenor parts. It will generally be found that one or two will develop real talent, and these act as leaders.

This kind of training does involve, as the previous writer mentioned, increased work for the teachers. But the weekly or fortnightly practices, if a careful study of the music is made, may often be productive of more good than any chance clubs or recreation evenings.

This does not mean that in the school the younger children should not also have their simpler hymns; but endeavours should always be made to give scope during some part of the service for the larger powers of the elder ones.

The cheap music published nowadays

¹ See p. 242. *Hymns for Heart and Voice* (Sunday School Association) also contains some simple services for school use.

makes it possible to sell to the senior scholars (just earning their own money) copies of the songs. And it will be found that these songs will be sung by them in the week—during the dinner-hour and while at their work—quite as readily as any other kind of song.

The voices of our elder scholars, thus developed, become a great addition to the church choir, and thus an easy step is made from the school to the church.

A. J. LAWRENCE.

'I WATCH the circle of the eternal years,
And read forever in the storied page
One lengthened roll of blood, and wrong,
and tears,—

One onward step of Truth from age to age.

'The poor are crushed; the tyrants link
their chain,
The poet sings through narrow dungeon
grates;

Man's hope lies quenched;—and, lo! in
steadfast gain

Freedom doth forge her mail of adverse
fates.

'Men slay the prophets; fagot, rack, and
cross,

Make up the groaning record of the past;
But Evil's triumphs are her endless loss,
And sovereign Beauty wins the soul at
last.

'No power can die that ever wrought for
Truth;

Thereby a law of Nature it became,
And lives unwithered in its blithesome
youth,

When he who called it forth is but a
name.'

LOWELL.—'Elegy on Channing.'

Lesson Studies on the Life of Jesus.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.



THESE Lesson Notes are simply outlines. They are meant to be used by the teacher at home, to suggest thoughts which may form helpful subjects of conversation with the class. They do not attempt to deal with the whole of the life of Christ, but rather with certain great aspects of his life and teaching which may help to make his personality more real, and his influence more living. They have been written in the earnest hope that they may do something to strengthen the love of Christ, and to show in what a real sense he is our Saviour and the Saviour of men. It is with this object and in this spirit that they should be used by the teacher.

Lesson I.—CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE.

Read *Luke* ii. 41-52. The subject of the lesson is early influences. This is the only story we have of the boyhood of Jesus, but it suggests some of the great influences which were working quietly upon his life. What were the chief of these? Try to get your scholars to tell you by the use of questions.

1. Home. The care of his parents for him is seen in the story. His home was a poor one, but we may be sure that it was a good one, all the more beautiful because it was simple. The protection of home. The dis-

cipline of home. The simple pleasures of home.

2. The world of human life beyond the home. Playmates, school-fellows; men at work, starting the thought, what he would be when he grew up; the rejoicing at harvest; the wedding, the funeral; all the common sights and sounds and incidents of the village life in Nazareth.

3. Religion. Every Jewish child felt the influence of religion from his earliest years. He was taught in his own home to believe in God and to obey Him, and also something of the great providence of God in the history of his people; 'These words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children.' (*Deut.* vi. 6, 7). Then there was the Sabbath every week, so different from ordinary days, with its special observances; the synagogue with its services; the great festivals of thanksgiving and commemoration; the occasional visit to the Temple at Jerusalem, so full of interest and novelty and great appeals to the imagination.

4. The wonder of his own heart, answering to these influences of the world around him. 'Both hearing them and asking them questions,' describes exactly a life capable of being taught, sensitive to influence, impressionable, eager to know and understand.

A practical object may be kept in view throughout the lesson, namely, that of showing how precisely similar

influences are at work in our lives, and what a difference it makes whether we are impressionable, sensitive to all that is good and holy in their teaching.

Lesson II.—JOHN THE BAPTIST.

Read *Luke* iii. 1-20. John the Baptist stands on the threshold of the New Testament. He is a connecting link between the Old Testament and the New Testament. In one aspect he is the last of the long line of prophets; in another he is the forerunner of Christ. Try to draw out and impress this twofold aspect of his character on your class.

1. His manner of life. He is a son of the wilderness, despising all the refinements and social conveniences of life. Food and clothing and the other pleasant things of the world are of no account, because of the great message burning in his heart.

2. The subjects of his teaching: the righteousness of God and the claims of morality upon human life, the certainty and nearness of judgment. It is given with energy and fulness of conviction, but with little tenderness and pity for human weakness. There is an element of vehemence which is not always in accord with the love which suffers long and is kind.

3. His magnificent courage, shown perhaps as much in his opposition to the conventional teaching of the world as in the tragic close of his life.

4. It is very instructive to note the contrast between him and Jesus Christ.

(a) John is an ascetic; the Son of

Man comes eating and drinking, *i.e.*, sharing the ordinary life of men.

(b) John lives apart from men and draws them into the wilderness after him. Christ lives among men and is continually seeking and saving the lost.

(c) John lays most stress upon judgment and penalty of sin, Christ upon the love which redeems.

(d) If hatred of evil is the dominant note of John's teaching, love of goodness, combined with an unwearied sympathy with goodness in all its forms, and a power of detecting goodness in its most secret hiding places, makes itself felt everywhere in the teaching of Christ.

Lesson III.—CHRIST IN THE SYNAGOGUE AT NAZARETH.

Read *Luke* iv. 14-32. This is one of the opening scenes of the ministry, and in its naturalness and simplicity may be taken as typical of the days of happy work in Galilee, when the common people heard him gladly, and the cross had not begun to cast its shadow across his path. Note however that even here there is an element of opposition, the misunderstanding and censure which goodness is exposed to so often, an opposition which was to grow in intensity to the end.

1. The naturalness of the beginning. There is no great proclamation that Christ has come, no solemn and striking inauguration of his work. In an obscure country district of Palestine he begins to talk to the people about God and His love and goodness. The life

he lives is equally simple. And yet the effect on men's minds is so unmistakable; he speaks with authority; every word tells.

2. The people whom he taught were for the most part poor and obscure. He does not seek for those who can appreciate him, or reserve his best for a select few. He trusts entirely to the power of the divine word and the response of the human heart.

3. His own view of his work and message is given in the passage which we have just read. His message was to be one of healing and comfort. He wished to deepen the sense of the tenderness and pity of God. The whole of his ministry is a living commentary on this passage. Note that the quotation from Isaiah breaks off just before the words, 'and the day of vengeance of our God.' Was this intentional?

4. A very useful and practical lesson may be drawn from all this. The greatest things are not those which make the most show, neither are the most enduring those which speak with the loudest voice. Love and goodness, the true heart and the simple life seem at times to be condemned to obscurity and forgetfulness: but they are the mightiest forces for the uplifting of the world. It is thus that the best gifts of God are given and the truest lives lived.

Lesson IV.—CHRIST AS A LEARNER.

Read *Matt.* vi. 25-30. This short passage has been chosen because it illustrates the way in which Christ was sensitive to the influence and

meaning of his surroundings and was continually learning from them.

We think of him so much as the peerless teacher of men, that we are apt to forget sometimes that he himself was continually learning. No one can be a teacher unless he is at the same time a learner. He may retail dry and lifeless facts, but he cannot make truth live.

Christ was continually learning from three sources; from Nature, Man, and God.

1. From Nature. The references to nature in the teaching of Christ are those of a poet. They are full of patient and loving observation. In the Gospels we are in the country, surrounded by a country atmosphere. Contrast this with the absence of references to nature in the Epistles, where the problems of the conscience and the soul are of absorbing interest. It is also worth noticing that it is nature in its quieter and more peaceful moods which seems to have spoken to the heart of Christ. He found his parables in the bird, and the lily, and the simple pursuits of a pastoral and agricultural life, rather than in the earthquake, the wind, and the fire.

2. He was continually learning from Man: and there are here deeper lessons than nature can ever teach. Mark the variety of human character which appears on the Gospel page. It was all interesting to him. Nearly everybody was of a very ordinary type, but lifted up into the light of his supreme reverence and sympathy they

cease to be commonplace. Christ could not have helped men as he did, if he had not been continually learning more and more of the need, and also of the power of the human soul, from the men and women amongst whom he lived.

3. He learned from God. We cannot separate this from the other two; for with Christ, Nature and Man are never apart from God. But he was also learning from God in his own heart, in the education of God's love, and the gradual unfolding of the great divine purpose in his life. He communes with God through Nature and Man, but he also holds direct speech with his Father. He goes apart to pray.

Lesson V.—CHRIST AS TEACHER.

Read *Matt.* vii. 21-29; and *Mark* xii. 28-34. Having spoken of Christ as a learner, we pass on naturally to say something of Christ as a teacher. He was the greatest teacher on the greatest of subjects. His teaching is the best, and has been the deepest in its influence on the lives of men, that the world has ever known.

1. The manner of his teaching. A great deal depends upon how things are taught, whether they are made to appear dry and lifeless or vivid and interesting. It makes a great deal of difference whether religion is taught as a number of hard statements about God, and duty, and the life to come; or as one of the most natural and beautiful and practical things which can occupy our thoughts. Christ never speaks of religion in the terms of abstract speculation, or as something

apart from life. His teaching is always simple, interesting, capable of being understood by all, and still with that note of urgency in it which makes men listen almost against their will. Another characteristic of his manner is that he adapts himself to his hearers without effort: he never condescends or speaks down to people. And so he is equally the teacher of the little child, and of the man grown old in wisdom and knowledge of the world.

2. The substance of his teaching. This is a great subject. A whole book might be written about it. But there are certain broad lines from which he never departs. (*a*) On the human side his emphasis is always not on believing a creed or belonging to a church, nor observing a rite; but on the good life or character, the good heart and the good deed which is its fruit. Note that there is nothing inconsistent with this, in believing a creed, or belonging to a church, or observing a rite: they may be among the great religious helps which God has provided for us. But the good life is the first, the essential thing. (*b*) On the divine side the emphasis of Christ is always on the love and goodness of God: not that he denied or overlooked the sterner aspects of the Divine Nature, his retributive justice and awful holiness; but his chief care was to help men to love God as their Father.

3. His teaching can never be separated from his life. He lived his own Gospel. This has been the source of its power in the world. He

himself is the unanswerable argument of its truth. We believe in his authority because we have looked upon the cross.

Lesson VI.—CHRIST AND HIS SYMPATHY WITH MEN.

Read *Mark* x. 17-22; *Matt.* ix. 35-38. These two passages may be taken as illustrating the sympathy of Christ with men. The first is an instance of his sympathy with an individual life in its unconscious need: note the beautiful touch given only in *Mark*, 'then Jesus beholding him loved him.' The other shews us our Lord in presence of a crowd which is appealing to him for help. This is a subject which has been touched upon already, but we may well devote a whole lesson to its consideration.

1. Christ in his sympathy for masses of men. We find him continually in the presence of a multitude. In his most sacred moments the crowd seems to be close at hand. There is something fascinating in numbers. It is the great heart of humanity which is beating behind all those upturned faces. The whole mystery of human life is written upon them. Many people feel this who can find nothing interesting in one commonplace man. But then how soon we grow tired of a crowd with its noise and excitement and restless desires! What faith and courage it must have required, what an inexhaustible sympathy, always to feel these voiceless needs of men, never to meet their demands with impatience or to be so

self-absorbed, as to have no helpful word to speak. It is one of the signs of our Lord's greatness of soul, and not less of the strength of his imagination, that when he sees the multitude he will not suffer them to be sent away, but is moved with compassion toward them.

2. His sympathy with individuals. There are numerous instances in the Gospels of this. Probably few, if any of them, were very interesting people. We find Nicodemus and Zacchæus, and the Magdalene, and the woman with the sick child, and the centurion, and all the others, interesting because they have stood for a short time in his presence. But at the time it required the keenness of his individual sympathy to find out how much there was to love and admire and help. Sympathy with a number of separate men and women, who are lifted by no special gift above the world's ordinary level, is a still higher test of spiritual greatness.

3. Observe that the sympathy of Christ is not confined, as we are perhaps at times apt to suppose, to the suffering and the sinful. It is extended also to full-blooded, healthy life, to the young, the prosperous, the strong; and in them it arouses dormant spiritual impulse. It is sympathy felt for the whole of life, and touching life at every point.

LESSON VII.—CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES.

Read *Matt.* iv. 18-22 and x. 1-15. We have here two of the chief passages relating to the place of the Apostles in

the ministry of Christ. The first deals with the calling of the chief of them; the second sets before us the instructions which were given to them for their first missionary journey. We hardly ever find the Master alone. He is always accompanied by the twelve. They form so distinctive a feature of his ministry, and so much depended upon their work and preaching afterwards, that it is well to consider what manner of men they were and what kind of training they received at his hands.

1. Christ chose his apostles from among the common people. He calls them from the midst of their daily occupations. They were poor. They were labourers. This means that they had received no special education or any technical religious training. But this was not necessary. What our Lord wanted in them was a mind and character that could be moulded gradually by his influence and ideas, and a special gift of faithfulness. What distinguished the twelve at first was, not a clear understanding of the Master's purpose and close agreement with his ideas, but a strong love and admiration for him as a personal friend. Simple loyalty, a boundless power of trusting him was essential at the outset; and these are found most readily among the 'common people.'

2. But this was only the foundation. When the Galilean fishermen left their nets and followed him, they were simply the raw material out of which preachers and missionaries were to be made. They

were to be trained slowly by their intimacy with the life of the Master. More and more they come to bear the impress of his character and thoughts. It was a training (*a*) in courage, as they were led along unfamiliar paths, and had to join hands with the Master in his opposition to many of the religious habits and judgments of their day; (*b*) in self-sacrifice, as it became clear how irrevocable was the step they had taken. It meant not only the voluntary withdrawal from many of the ordinary pleasures of life, but also loneliness and suffering and danger. This sterner side of their calling was only revealed little by little as they were able to bear it. (*c*) It was training in deeper and broader thoughts of God and his kingdom, from the religion of marvel, 'lo herè! and lo there!' to the religion of spiritual influence; 'the kingdom of God is within you.'

3. Christ trained his apostles not by any definite methods of instruction, but by associating them with himself. The essential thing was that they should come to understand him with that quickness of sympathy which is conveyed only by love and personal intercourse. Goodness can be taught best by daily fellowship with a good life. The love of God is quickened in us by loving one in whom it has been kindled already. This was the method of Christ.

Lesson VIII.—CHRIST AND HUMAN FRIENDSHIP.

Read *Luke* x. 38-42. This beautiful little incident has a variety of lessons,

but we may take it now as illustrating Christ's need of human friendship. This quiet home in Bethany seems to have been one of the places to which he resorted as a familiar friend. Here he might find rest when he was weary, and a quick, responsive sympathy in the midst of the misunderstandings which beset him. This need of a few close, personal friends is seen elsewhere in his choice of three of the apostles to share some of the most intimate experiences of life with him.

1. In the last lesson we referred to the chief reason for the calling of the twelve, that they might be trained to become partners in his work. Another reason may well have been the need which he felt of an inner circle of sympathy. Out of the twelve he chose three who were evidently his friends in a special sense, Peter and James and John. We find them with him on the Mount of Transfiguration, and in the Garden of Gethsemane.

2. It is interesting to note the variety of character represented by this little group. With all his weakness, and the tragedy of his fall, there is something very attractive about the character of Peter. We can readily understand why the Master chose him. He is a very human man, impulsive and warm-hearted. We find him continually acting as the spokesman of the rest in any expression of personal feeling. When Christ begins to tell them of the days of darkness and death which are approaching, it is Peter who exclaims, 'this shall never be unto

thee.' When he asks the sad question, 'Will ye also go away?' it is Peter again who is ready with the answer, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.' The character of John is not drawn so clearly in the first three Gospels. It is more undeveloped. But doubtless already it contained elements of tender religious feeling and spiritual sensitiveness, which were afterwards to make him distinctively the apostle of love, the interpreter of the heart of Christ.

3. Perhaps at times it seems almost surprising that Christ, with his matchless spiritual strength, should have depended at all upon such weak human friends. But consider what elements of sympathy it must have supplied to his life, what close and touching human interests. What strong insight and patience this friendship with a man like Peter reveals; while the little group of tender and devoted women who appear from time to time upon the gospel page, ministering to him in quiet womanly ways, of their substance and their sympathy, make us feel how wonderfully human he was, how closely he shared all our needs, without in any way detracting from his spiritual grandeur, the greatness of that life which he lived alone with God.

LESSON IX.—THE NEW MESSAGE IN ITS OPPOSITION TO JEWISH ORTHODOXY.

Read *Matt.* xii. 1-21. This is one out of many passages which we might select to illustrate the subject of this lesson. Our Lord began as a preacher of the message, 'the kingdom of heaven

is at hand,' and the common people heard him gladly. At first he appears to have met with success and popularity. But he was working in the midst of a people with a great past behind them, and with fixed traditions of religious habit and belief. The land was full of accredited teachers of religion. Safety lay in conforming to their standards of orthodoxy and their conventional religious practice. As the meaning of Christ's teaching and the necessary consequences of accepting it became clearer, there was certain to be a feeling of opposition aroused, which might soon grow into one of active hostility.

1. There is on the side of Christ no such thing as opposition for opposition's sake, or novelty for the mere love of some new thing. It grew up as the inevitable consequence of the difference between religious truth as he taught it, and the religious habits of the people. There was, on the other hand, much both in conduct and belief upon which he placed the highest value. The belief in one God, the duty of loving and obeying Him, the supremacy of righteousness in private and national life, these were things which no Jew would have ever called in question; and they formed a solid foundation of sentiment and practice upon which to build. Then again, we do not find our Lord breaking away entirely from the pious habits of his people. There is nothing inconsistent with spiritual teaching in forms and ceremonies, if they are rightly used. He himself

attended the synagogue and joined in the national festivals at Jerusalem.

2. The opposition arose from the confusion which had grown up between the moral law, which was of universal obligation, and the ceremonial law, which was only of temporary benefit. Christ distinguished between the spiritual essence of religion, love to God and holiness of life, and all the symbols and ceremonies in which the religious spirit clothes itself. So soon as there was any inconsistency between the two he took his stand firmly on the side of spiritual religion.

3. He was thus in no sense a destroyer. He only sought to do away with false reverence, that love and reverence might be paid unreservedly to things that were essential to love and goodness. Sabbath-keeping, fasting, ceremonies, all the external forms of righteousness, must yield to the claims of the righteousness of the heart. This was the simple and deep principle which inspired his teaching and guided his conduct.

Lesson X.—THE PARTING OF THE WAYS.

Read *Matt.* xvi. 13-38. Any careful reader of the Gospel will see at once that the incident described in this passage is a very important one. It stands at the parting of the ways. Hitherto Christ had walked in Galilee. In spite of some opposition he had on the whole met with much success. His work had been happy. The people had loved him. He had 'seen Satan, as lightning, fall from heaven.' Now

there is to be a great change. Prophecies of suffering and death are often on his lips. He seeks to make plain to his disciples what following him really involves. His word is more and more the message of the cross. The last journey to Jerusalem is shortly to begin. The rest of the Gospel is occupied with the closing scenes of the ministry at Jerusalem.

1. At Cæsarea Philippi Jesus accepts the title of the Messiah, the Anointed One; but immediately he gives the strange command that they should tell no man of it. The reason for this is probably to be found in the fact that he meant something quite different by it from the ideas which were current among the people; and he was anxious to avoid misunderstanding till they came to understand him better. He was indeed the divinely appointed Deliverer; he had received an unction from the Holy One. It would have been false to deny it, untrue to his mission to refuse so high a dignity. But while popular expectation was fixed upon the visible splendours of sovereignty, he had come to reign in a purely spiritual sense.

2. It is clear that the twelve, and how much more the people who were not so close to him, expected Jesus to set himself at the head of a movement of national deliverance, to execute judgment on their foes, and usher in a period of temporal splendour and prosperity. All this was like a veil lying upon their hearts, hiding the true

meaning of the Gospel from them. It was time that they should learn that it is not in this way that God gives his richest blessings. Goodness must be tested by trial; love must be purified by suffering. The Deliverer must die for the sake of his people; and those who would come after him must also bear their cross.

3. Observe the strong contrasts in the two periods of the ministry. (a) At first we have the gospel of the kingdom, then the teaching of the cross. (b) At first the gladness and privilege of being children of God, then the price in personal sacrifice if men are to be worthy of it. (c) At first the eager welcome, the listening crowd, the visible success; then the loneliness, the searching of men's hearts, many falling away and only a few remaining with him to the end. There is no contradiction between the two. The emphasis is on a different side of God's truth. Both are needed for a complete Christianity, the Gospel of the Kingdom and the teaching of the Cross.

Lesson XI.—THE LAST DAYS.

Read *Matt.* xxvii. 24-50. This is the account of the Crucifixion. It is sufficient to bring the great central fact vividly before us, Jesus Christ dies upon the cross. It would, however, be well to read straight through chapters xxvi. and xxvii. as a connected narrative. It is the world's greatest story, told with matchless simplicity and directness.

1. It is full of dramatic contrasts

which may be briefly pointed out. The serenity of the Master and the dark forebodings of the disciples; the steadfastness of Christ and the weak vacillation of Peter; the rage and hatred of the judges and accusers and the calm dignity of their victim; the brutal, noisy crowd surrounding the cross and the loveliness of soul of him who hangs upon it. How beautiful, too, is the hint of spiritual awakening in the words of the centurion, as perhaps for the first time he sees that death may be great and heroic, 'Truly this was the Son of God.'

2. The death of Christ was a supreme act of faithfulness. Anything else would have involved disloyalty to the word of God in his own heart. A humbler sphere, a less awful claim, and it might have been different. But those whom God calls to great things may not reject the penalties of personal leadership and authority. Observe how constantly the need of faithfulness and watchfulness is dwelt on in the teaching of these last days, *e.g.*, in the Parable of the Ten Virgins, the Parable of the Talents, and the words to the disciples in Gethsemane.

3. The death of Christ was a supreme act of love. 'Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends.' (a) It was an act of love to God; it is the perfect love of God in the soul which alone can make it faithful unto death and fill even the thought of death with a great peace. There is no bitterness, no complaint against the hard law of

conscience in the death of Christ. It is a death made beautiful by love. (6) It was an act of love to men. It was not simply a lonely, individual act. It was meant to help and bless and save: 'I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.' It is this which makes the Crucifixion different from a simple martyrdom. It was endured for the sake of a principle of truth, but also for the sake of men whom he loved.

4. The power of the cross. It made all the teaching of Christ effective for use by giving it this new and irresistible appeal. It convinced men of his sincerity. A message for which one has been willing to die must at least be listened to. It did something more, without which the deepest religious impression can never be produced. It spoke to the spiritual imagination of men. Here was something in the vastness of its love, in its mysterious power of filling the heart with joy and peace, which was always luring them on, and still ever beyond and above them, a spiritual possession of inexhaustible richness.

Lesson XII.—THE LIFE THAT CANNOT DIE.

Read *Luke* xxiv. 13-35. This is one of the most beautiful stories connected with the Resurrection. It brings before us the great faith from which the early Christian church took its rise. The cross was not the end. Over the Christ whom they loved, death could have no power. He was not in the cold, dark sepulchre. He was risen and alive for evermore. At

first the disciples appear to have been in despair. All their hopes were crushed. Their Master had been taken from them by a 'malefactor's' death. What was this vain dream they had been cherishing? 'We trusted that it should have been he which should have redeemed Israel!' Then light shined in their darkness. With a certainty which admitted of no shadow of doubt they knew that Christ still lived. Different interpretations may be given to the various details in the Gospel narratives, which by no means always agree among themselves, but the central fact remains, 'Jesus lives!' Strong in that faith they went forth to conquer the world. It is the joyful message which rings through the early Christian preaching. It was not the precepts of a dead teacher, but the life and word of their ever-living Lord which enabled the apostles to endure hardness and peril, in order to make known that message.

1. Jesus lives in the Christian Church, the body of men and women who have from the beginning met to worship in his name and fellowship, interpreted his teachings, preached his word, and sought to imitate his life. Christ is himself the continuous principle of Christianity. Loyalty to him is the bond of union between men of differing thought and habit of life in all ages.

2. Jesus lives in the world, in the higher civilization, the juster laws, the humaner feeling, the nobler phil-

anthropy, which have been the fruit of his influence. The world in which we live to-day is steeped in Christian influences. We think and feel and act in certain ways because Christ is still a living influence in our midst. We can no more separate what is best in our civilization from Christianity than we can jump away from our own shadow.

3. Jesus lives in our hearts. It is of little use to us that he should be living in the church and the world if he is not a living influence here. We owe some of our holiest thoughts and brightest hopes to him. In proportion as the love of Christ fills our hearts we shall learn to love God and our neighbour more simply and sincerely. To have the image of his perfect life constantly before us is one of the surest safeguards against sin. That we may more and more experience this wonderful helpfulness, and find in what a real sense he still lives for us,—this has been the chief object of these lessons.

W. H. DRUMMOND.

‘LET my voice ring out and over the earth,
Through all the grief and strife,
With a golden joy in a silver mirth :
Thank God for Life !

‘Let my voice swell out through the great
abyss
To the azure dome above,
With a chord of faith in the harp of bliss :
Thank God for Love !

‘Let my voice thrill out beneath and above,
The whole world through :
O my Love and Life, O my Life and Love,
Thank God for you !’

J. THOMSON.

Prayers for the Sunday School.

MORNING.



GOD, we thank Thee for this morning hour. How beautiful it is to be alive ! Help us to-day to set our minds on learning something. Help us at all times to set our hearts on being good. AMEN.

AFTERNOON.

FATHER in heaven, the Giver of all good things, we thank Thee for these hymns we sing, these books we read, and for the school to which we belong. Bless, we pray Thee, whatever we have learned or taught to-day. And may thy blessing abide upon our teachers and companions, our parents, brothers and sisters, and all for whom we ought to pray, to-day and evermore. AMEN.

O LORD our God, help us to love our school more and more. For all the good we have gained in it, for all the joys we have had in it, make us truly thankful. The instruction it offers us, enable us to heed wisely. The pleasures it affords us, may we use and not abuse. When far away from our school, may we still remember that we belong to it ; and in all we say or do may we never bring shame upon it or upon ourselves. AMEN.

J. J. WRIGHT.

Child Study.

III. The Necessity for Obedience.



ALTHOUGH it is certainly true that the world to-day has a loftier ideal of childhood than in the olden times, when little ones were too frequently kept in the background, and hedged about with vexatious restrictions, yet there was one virtue, at least, on which our forefathers insisted, which we to-day are rather apt to slight or ignore.

In our desire 'not to be hard' on our children, we often do them grave injury by not insisting on ready obedience. Sometimes a parent will make it a boast, 'My boy will never obey an order unless he knows why it is given'; and this, forsooth, is supposed to be praiseworthy. To such a parent a course of reading from *Midshipman Easy* might fitly be prescribed.

It is absolutely necessary for boys and girls to learn to obey readily and cheerfully, for the lesson will be constantly needed when they have grown to be men and women. Indeed, all our life through, obedience is essential; the world is governed by laws, and disobedience will bring its penalty. It is not enough to say that we 'did not

know' that fire will burn, or water drown, or drunkenness bring ruin; these laws *are*, and they *must* be obeyed.

When we realise this, we see how beneficial is the plan that surrounds us, in our youth and time of ignorance, with parents and teachers, who will interpose and save us from breaking the law unwittingly. Nay, we are protected to a great extent in after-life, by the laws of our country; these are also framed with a view to keeping folk from falling into pitfalls through want of knowledge.

Perhaps one of the best illustrations of the use of law, and the necessity for obedience to it, may be seen any weekday in our crowded city streets, streets crammed full of vehicles going in contrary directions. What confusion and danger would result if each driver had nothing but his own will to guide him! But he has to obey. First, there is what is called the 'rule of the road,' by means of which all the vehicles are gathered into two streams, one half of the road being allotted to each; and second, a policeman is there to give the word, or rather sign, of command;

and that, too, must be obeyed. An upward movement of his arm, and the mighty stream stops, as if by magic; and, until the hand has dropped, no cart or carriage may continue on its way. I do not think a more striking illustration of the value of, and the necessity for, obedience can be given to our children than this.

Truly it is worth our while to strive our very hardest to teach our children to obey, for thereby we shall save them so much unpleasantness and suffering. I shall never forget going to see two children who had bad throats—poor little spoilt bairns! They had never learnt that mother must be obeyed; and now that the nasty physic had to be taken, and the throat swabbed out, they absolutely rebelled; and, alas! 'being so very wilful,' they, like Elaine of old, had to 'die.'

No doubt it is difficult to teach children to obey, but it is astonishing how early they may be trained. One of my little 'granny-nephews' knew perfectly well what *to obey* meant by the time he was two years old. His mother, who is passionately devoted to him, has always impressed on him that 'Mother must be obeyed; she knows best.' At the same time when disobedience had brought on obviously unpleasant results, she would afterwards point them out to him; until he came to understand the meaning of the words, 'You must obey, or punishment *will* follow,' although he was by no means a sedate, quiet child of the precocious type, but as merry a little

rascal as you might wish to see. One day 'mother' sat him up in his high chair by the table, with a box of large beads to thread. She was going out of the room for a few minutes, and, before doing so, told Hugh that if he dropped any of the beads he was not to stoop over to try to pick them up. She was afraid, of course, of his overbalancing himself. Well, the threading went on smoothly for a while, when unfortunately a lovely blue bead dropped. There it lay at his feet; if only he could pick it up! The temptation was too strong; he leant over the side of his chair and—toppled over. The noise soon brought mother, to whom the little son instantly called out, 'Punishment *did* follow, mother,' as he ruefully rubbed his head.

Children should be taught that parents and teachers are to be obeyed because *they know best*; there is the primary reason, and the 'Why? why?' often heard in some households whenever an order is given, should be instantly stopped. But for all that the 'why' that so naturally suggests itself to the child's mind must not be ignored; there is a time when explanations should be given. For this purpose a quiet hour on Sunday, or other leisure time, may well be devoted; when father or mother may recall an event of the past week where obedience to an order had saved their boy from some harm unforeseen by him, or where disobedience had brought disaster. There is nothing more important than that our children should

understand that commands are not given in arbitrary fashion, but that there has been a good and sufficient reason for them, although the young folks could not know what this was at the time. Such a practice as this careful explanation will work well in two ways; it will make parents think twice before giving an order, so that they may be sure in their hearts that it is a reasonable one; and it will develop in the child a trust in father and mother; and he will learn to trust them even when he cannot quite understand their action.

We must remember, however, that it is *only* on the ground that we know better what is right than do our children, that we have any claim upon their obedience. The remembrance of this will supply us with the reason why Tommy should not obey his little brother, for instance, when he suggests some mischievous prank—a frequent incident in the nursery; and as the children grow older and wiser we shall expect them to obey the inner voice; and refuse to follow anyone whose orders are out of harmony with those of the hidden monitor.

This careful, may I say more scientific, method of training our children into the principles of true obedience, would, no doubt, appear very roundabout to some of our good forefathers who found a birch rod a far quicker method. Even now some of our parents think that force is the best way of settling the matter; but a few minutes' reflection will make us see

that repression and development are totally different things; and if we want our children to be good 'from the inside' we must aim at the slow, gradual cultivation of those right principles which shall hereafter grow and become sturdy, and bear rich fruit in a high and noble life.

A woman was one day talking to me about her children, and said: 'Ah, as I was saying to Willie the other day, I *did* have to obey *my* mother. I only disobeyed her once, and I've good cause to remember it, too. She had sent me out to get two ounces of tea and told me not to loiter; but I met some schoolfellows and stopped to have a game with them, so that I was home late. Well, when I got back my mother was standing at the door, and she "up" with her hand and she gave me such a blow that it struck me to the ground. She was powerful strong, my mother was! (This last was said, oddly enough, with great pride!) "I'll teach you to obey me," she cried, and then I was sent up to bed without any supper for that night; and I never dared to disobey her after that.' Simple and effective treatment, this, certainly, so far as obedience went; but I do not think we should care to go back to those good old times, when the spirit of love was so rigidly kept in the background. Not that parents did not love their children, but it was thought the right thing to conceal that love, and thus its sunshine so rarely warmed the little hearts that needed its rays of sweetness and of light.

Recreation and the Sunday School.



APPLY it is not necessary at this time of day to offer an 'apology' for games or recreative clubs from the point of view of the Sunday school. Healthy pastimes properly organized and vigorously sustained are to our thinking not only a highly beneficial, but an almost indispensable appendage to the Sunday school. There is no difference of opinion as to the value of a good game of cricket or football as a sane and delightful exercise; or, on winter evenings, the amateur concert, the magic lantern or the social dance. These things are good in themselves. They are no less beneficial as safeguards from pure indolence and from vicious habits and associations. So, as a source of the creation of joy, an extension of the blue sky over the lives of our children, and as a moral defence, those of us who are seriously bent on promoting their welfare cannot wholly neglect a share in their pastimes.

The entire life of a child has an interest and a claim upon us. We need to know something, therefore, about his play. To feel assured that it is sound and healthy, pure and invigorating, not wasteful or inane.

Nevertheless, with the establishment of the cricket or football club, with the organization of the social evening, the

Sunday school is not absolved from further concern respecting the sports of its children.

It is at this point that we are brought face to face with a purpose and an ideal which is nothing short of that which should govern our whole influence over our scholars, viz., the laying of a foundation for a perfect manhood and a perfect womanhood. Such a foundation must not need to be dug up again a few years hence and altogether remodelled on account of its inefficiency. Nor can we admit any inferior ultimate aim. We regard the child in body and soul, in heart and intellect, as a unity to be developed all round and all together. We seek to nurture tempers unwarped by physical degradation, and thoughts of life undistorted by social apathy. The perfect life is one which has discovered true sources of recreation. The unrested, undelighted life is an unwholesome and unsavoury particle in the community. For this reason recreation is to be regarded as much a part of Sunday school influence as temperance and cleanliness. If, alongside our good class-teaching we leave the vacant hours of our boys and girls to be wholly filled up by haphazard amusements which may be good or may be bad, we are leaving them to walk straight into temptation, undefended by any talisman.

Recreation, therefore, in its bearing on character, claims our earnest attention in the Sunday school. Some of the good influences of play upon

character are obvious enough. The subduing effect for instance, on an irritable temper, of a good thumping with the gloves; the acquisition of the almost impossible virtue of continuing to respect the umpire who has given you out 'leg before wicket'; the courage to get a bad knock at football and braggartly pretend before your mother that you 'rather like it.'

There are other moral aspects of the subject: other laurels to be won by temper, pluck, and endurance. The things that ruin our children when they have grown up, and as they are growing up, are the fruits of idleness. They are ruined by the leaden weight of time on their hands, to gain relief from which the vulgarest amusements are accepted because they are always at hand, and because the unchartered mind is ready for nothing loftier and purer. The counterpoise is not far to seek. The boy, for instance, who has plenty of opportunity for genuine, vital play and who learns to enter heartily into his game, rarely, I think, cares for gambling when he grows bigger. The bane of our British boy-life is largely the disease of the non-player, the idler.

Proper organization of recreation is of value, not only to provide with given resources the greatest amount of happiness for the greatest number, but also as a means of indirect moral influence. This was well illustrated in the case of a lad, distinguished in school by his incorrigibility, who was appointed secretary of a games club. In such

a position of honour and responsibility a boy may gain his first idea of self-respect and responsibility. He discovers the absolute need of method in some shape, and meanwhile he fills a niche where he can be frequently sought and quietly helped and advised, and even consulted by teacher or minister. The excellent effect of such tactics I have seen illustrated more than once. The awkward or dangerous boy has been managed, and managed unwittingly by *himself*. Such a boy will be concerned now and again in the good behaviour of his playmates, and this will tend to put him on his dignity in school and at home.

From a physical point of view in the first place, but by no means exclusively, there is nothing to excel a gymnasium. The fact that Sunday school gymnasiums are becoming comparatively common should be answer enough to those who fear the cost or trouble. An initial expenditure of from £10 to £20 and a small membership fee of say, a penny per week for current expenses, provides the elder boys with a source of recreation of unflagging interest and benefit. All the apparatus should be of a kind that can be brought out and fixed up in the schoolroom in a few minutes, and as expeditiously stowed away when done with. For the larger sum named a strong club can be provided with horizontal and parallel bars, with the requisite mat-trasses, clubs, dumb-bells, swinging rings or trapeze, boxing gloves, head-guards and sword sticks. These are

not all necessary to begin with ; while a young fellow who has had some gymnastic training can be found in many schools to act as demonstrator. If found necessary some little supervision may be occasionally given in order to assure proper order, and all, but members of the club, should for this reason be rigidly excluded. The muscular development secured by gymnastics is but one of its recommendations. Not less is the *moral* tonic. Presence of mind, fearlessness, caution, perseverance become the equipment of the practised gymnast.

One cannot help observing how many of our boys degenerate intellectually from the hour they leave school and quickly lose, as someone has said, all they have learnt save reading enough to master 'Tit-Bits,' and arithmetic enough to calculate their bets.

As the majority of these boys leave school just at the time when they could learn the most, it is infinitely important that our defective system of education, leaving in so many instances vacant minds with unformed habits to drift into gambling, intemperance, and sensuality in order to mitigate the dulness of the sluggish hours to a stolid brain, should be supplemented by such means as tend to create wholesome appetites, robustness of character and refinement of mind. Much may be done in this direction through the channel of such indoor and outdoor recreation as is available in connection with our Sunday schools. H. M. LIVENS.

Illustrative Anecdote.

Two Ways of Speaking.

IN former years there was a king in Egypt named Snefru, who ruled in Memphis. And it came to pass that he dreamed, and in his dream his teeth fell out of his mouth.

And he sent for the soothsayers and told them the dream. The first interpreter answered, 'Woe unto thee, O king, all thy kinsmen shall die before thee! Then was Snefru wroth, caused this messenger of evil to be scourged, and sent for a second interpreter. He answered, 'O king, live for ever; thy life shall be longer than the life of thy kinsman, and of the men of thy house!'

Then the king smiled and gave presents unto this interpreter, for though the interpretations were one, yet the latter had understood how to clothe his message in a web of fair and pleasant words.

G. EBERS.—'The Egyptian Princess.'

'WHAT discord should we bring into the universe if our prayers were all answered! Then *we* should govern the world, and not God. And do you think we should govern it better? It gives me only pain when I hear the long, wearisome petitions of men asking for they know not what. As frightened women clutch at the reins when there is danger, so do we grasp at God's government with our prayers. Thanksgiving with a full heart,—and the rest, silence and submission to the Divine will.'

H. W. LONGFELLOW.



Infant Class Teaching.

IN order to teach an Infant Class successfully the teacher must have a positive love of little children; she should be possessed of a spirit of cheeriness and enjoyment, and a sense of fun and humour will add greatly to her power.

All this is quite in keeping with a proper regard for order and discipline; and, indeed, though some people regard them as incompatibles, we have only to look round on the teachers whom we know and we shall at once recognise that the most successful and the best-loved teacher is he or she in whom these apparently conflicting qualities are combined. As a matter of fact, no one really *likes* disorder, though both children and adults too often like to do something which will produce it! Yes, order and discipline we *must* have if the lesson hour is to be a happy and profitable one.

This granted, we come to the question of tools. From what sources will

an Infant School teacher derive the best help? May we not answer: from hymns or other simple poetry, said or sung; from stories; from the black-board; and from objects which will illustrate the lesson.

Hymns are so generally used that we need not say much about them here; stories, however, though quite as popular, do require some few words of counsel. And this, first because storytelling, which is really one of the fine arts, is generally considered such a simple affair; not needing, and scarce worthy of any special effort. To my mind a story to be well told,—with dramatic force and proper detail—does require practice in the art; and it is worth the practice, too, for there is scarcely anything which gives greater pleasure—ay! and greater profit, too,—than a well chosen and a well told story.

The first essential is that the teacher should know the story thoroughly before attempting to tell it; she must have the whole picture of the various scenes in her mind, so that she may bring out all the detail (stories are nothing without detail) with definiteness, and—most important—without being put out by small interruptions.

Another point, worth remembering, is not to be afraid of repeating nouns; children often get muddled when pronouns are much used. Again, with little ones, I have often found that they are always interested when imitations of the sounds made by animals are introduced; so that, if I see eyes turning away, or hands beginning to

fidget, I try to bring in a 'bow-wow' or 'mi-ow' into the story, and the wandering attention of the small audience is instantly recalled.

Of course, in *thinking out* our story before coming to the class we shall adapt, or alter it, so as to suit the children for whom it is intended; it is well, therefore, in those cases where two teachers take the class alternately, for each to keep to 'their own' stories. Children love to hear the same tale over and over again; but they will consider it 'all wrong' if changes are made in what they consider is the original version.

The third tool, the blackboard, is one that all of us who are unskilled in drawing, naturally approach with great diffidence; but when once we have been bold enough to try the effect of putting down a few strokes upon it, we shall soon see what a fascination the crudest forms have for our children, and we shall be encouraged to persevere. Let anyone, who wishes to use this invaluable 'helper,' have the board at home for a week or two, and practise making letters first, and afterwards simple outline figures, with white or coloured chalks; then, practice having given confidence and some measure of skill, when the teacher ventures to display her new-found powers before the class, the result will certainly be a pleasurable one, both to herself and to the little ones. Indeed, she will probably come to take as much interest in this elementary picture-making as do the scholars; for it is really delightful

to see how these fill in all our deficiencies with their warm imaginations.

The last 'tool' that has been mentioned is that of any object that can be brought to illustrate the lesson. An old bird-nest, a stuffed bird, a bit of coral, a piece of honeycomb, a lump of sugar, or anything that can be worked into the lesson, is sure to awake interest. Besides its obvious use, it is also good because it shows the children that 'teacher' has thought about them; and this is more appreciated than we sometimes are inclined to think.

One word as to *manner*. Although it is essential for the teacher to be bright, cheery and brisk, yet a certain repose of manner should always be cultivated. The voice, too, should be kept under control; otherwise it becomes 'shrieky' in tone, and this is never conducive to the maintenance of authority.

The Shepherd, Mother, and King.

LESSONS FOR JUNIOR AND INFANT CLASSES.

Let us pass on now to a series of lessons based on one of Mrs. Barbauld's Hymns in Prose, which I have ventured to put into verse, to be sung to the old tune of 'Gaily the troubadour.' The course will take from two to three months. When the verses are thoroughly known they might fitly be sung at the Winter Tea-party; three children being dressed as Shepherd, Mother, and King respectively, while the rest of the children stand on either side.

The Shepherd, Mother, and King.

List to the Shepherd, call - ing his sheep; Gent - ly he lead-eth them
 Down from the steep. With one lit - tle lamb - kin close to his breast,
 In the fold, From the cold, Go they to rest. Well may they trust him,
 Love and o - bey, For he cares, Yes, he cares For them al - way.

Key: E \flat 2/4
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I.

List to the Shepherd
 Calling his sheep;
 Gently he leadeth them
 Down from the steep.
 (With) one little lambkin
 Close to his breast,
 In the fold, from the cold
 Go they to rest.
 Well may they trust him,
 Love and obey,
 For he cares, yes, he cares
 For them each day.

II.

But who will care for,
 Love and protect,
 Him, the kind shepherd
 (From) wrong and neglect;
 God is his shepherd
 Leading him straight
 (Be)-friending him, tending him
 Early and late.
 Well may he trust Him,
 Love and obey,
 For He cares, yes, He cares,
 For him each day.

III.

Baby, my dearie,
 On mother's knee,
 Peacefully sleeping,
 Happy and free.
 She will protect thee
 (When) dangers abound,
 For her love, from above,
 Circles her round.
 Well mayst thou trust her,
 Love and obey,
 For she cares, yes, she cares,
 For thee each day.

IV.

But who will shield her,
 Teach and instruct,
 And through her troubles
 Safely conduct?
 God is her Father,
 He loves her so.
 All she needs, all she heeds,
 He sure doth know.

Well may she trust Him,
 Love and obey,
 For He cares, yes, He cares
 For her each day.

V.

See where the migh(ty) king
 Sits on his throne,
 Peoples and treasures
 Calling his own.
 Ah! he is good and just,
 Wise are his laws,
 So rejoice, every voice,
 For there is cause.
 Well may they trust him,
 Love and obey;
 For he cares, yes, he cares,
 For them each day.

VI.

But should the migh(ty) king
 Seek to do wrong,
 Say, who will punish him?
 He is so strong.
 God giveth laws to him
 He is his Lord,
 'Gainst his word, vain to gird,
 Useless his sword.
 So let us trust Him,
 Love and obey;
 For He cares, yes He cares
 For us each day.

VII.

Gladly we come to Thee,
 Shepherd and King,
 Father and Mother both,
 Thy praise we sing.
 Thou knowest what is best;
 May we each one
 Humbly pray, ever say,
 Thy will be done.
 Well may we trust Him,
 Love and obey;
 For He cares, yes, he cares
 For us alway.

N.B.—The music and the words are put first, but I would strongly recommend that no verse should be learnt before the corresponding lesson has been given. It is a long course, and if the verses are all gone over in the early stages, the freshness will have been quite lost long before the end is reached.

LESSON I.—THE SHEPHERD.

It will be well to begin the lesson in an informal way, by calling attention to some woollen dress or comforter worn by one of the class. Let the children feel the warmth of the wool; ask them where it comes from, what colour it is at first, etc.; and then draw their attention to the sheep. Tell them that when the cold winter is over and the sheep do not need to be so warmly clad, their fleece is cut off and washed and made into cloth. You may then take up the lesson in some such words as the following: 'Poor little sheep, they must feel very cold when their winter jackets are sheared, and they will need to be well looked after by the kind shepherd. When the warm weather comes and mother puts away *your* winter things, she can easily take them out and let you wear them again if a cold day comes, but the sheep cannot put on his winter coat again, once it has been taken off. Still the good shepherd will look after his sheep and will take care of them. He knows each one, and every night he gathers them together in the fold, where they may sleep snugly and peacefully till morning. Then they follow him, often up the steep hills and where the grass is tender and sweet, spending the day in the pure air and pleasant sunshine. Sometimes they wander too far, but the shepherd's dog will tell his master if they are in danger, and the shepherd will come to their assistance. The sheep love their shepherd and follow where

he leads. For the shepherd walks in front of them; he is not like the drover that we see in our streets driving the sheep along with his stick. The sheep love their shepherd, but alas! sometimes a lamb or a sheep goes astray because it does not obey him. Listen and I will tell you the story of

THE SILLY LITTLE LAMB.¹

There was once upon a time a little lamb who lived with its mother and many more sheep in the country. Every day the shepherd used to lead them up to the hillside, and the little lambkin would spend the whole day playing with its mother and feeding on the green grass. For some time this little lamb was very happy, but at last she had a naughty fit on, I think. 'Baa-baa,' said the lamb to her mother, as she rubbed up against her. 'What do you want?' asked the mother sheep. 'Mother,' answered the lambkin, 'I don't want to go to the hillside to-day. I want to do just what I like. I want to go right over there among the green trees and see what a forest is like.' 'Ba-ba,' answered the mother; 'you silly little lamb; out there the grass is not nearly so sweet, for the sun cannot get at it through the trees; and besides, in the wood I have heard that there are wild beasts. If a wolf were

¹ I feel almost that some apology is due for taking this very familiar story. But in the first place it is a great favourite with little children, and in the second, it gives a good illustration of what I said in the introduction, with reference to children liking to hear the sounds of animals imitated. If the class is too advanced for this story, the teacher can go on to that in the next lesson, about David.

to get hold of you he would soon kill you with his ugly teeth.' Just then, Rover, the shepherd's faithful doggie called out, 'Bow-wow, bow-wow, make haste and come with us to the hillside.' So the little lamb had to go with her mother; but all day long she was sulky, and kept thinking to herself, 'I wish I could do as I like, I wish I could get away to the woods!' And that night, when all the sheep returned home to their fold, the silly little lamb slipped off from the rest and ran away. Away, away she ran, until she reached the big wood. At first she leapt about with delight at being free, free to do what she liked without anyone to hinder her. But the night grew dark and the lamb began to be afraid. 'Ba-ba,' said she to herself, 'I wish mother was near; it's very cold and lonely to be all by oneself.' Still she wandered on, getting further and further into the wood. Suddenly she heard a low growl, and, looking round, she saw two small lights close to her. Ah! poor silly little lambkin; the lights are the eyes of a hungry wolf. 'Ba-baa,' cries the lamb; 'please Mr. Wolf, have pity on me and don't kill me.' But the wolf would not listen; he gathered himself together, and was just going to spring, when see, there is another light shining brightly just behind. The shepherd had found out that the lamb had strayed from the fold, and had come to seek her with his lantern. Now he raises his heavy stick and strikes down the wolf; then he lifts the trembling little lambkin in

his arms and carries her back to the fold. Oh! how glad the mother was to see her lamb safe home again; and as for the lamb, why, she nestled down close to her mother and told her all her sad story, and then went fast asleep, determined never again to disobey the good shepherd.

The children will be ready for a little change after sitting still for the story, so a few hand and feet exercises should be now taken, after which the first verse should be taught, the teacher explaining it as she goes on. The first verse may take two Sundays to master thoroughly; the others will come easily when the metre has been once grasped. When the words have been repeated several times, the teacher should sing it to the children, or the tune can be played on the piano, after which it may be tried altogether.

LESSON II.

Begin by questioning closely on the last lesson. These questions should have been thought out beforehand in order to make them lead up to the central thought, *i.e.*, the loving care that a good shepherd takes for his sheep.

For the story for to-day, I will refer the teacher to *1 Sam.* xvii. 12-50. This story of David should be carefully read and thought out by the teacher, and then given in her own words, adapting it so that it may give a living interest to the children. Tell how the lad was 'ruddy, and of a fair countenance,'

using simple words; how he kept his father's sheep, and how, when a lion came and carried off a lamb, David went after him and saved the lamb and killed the lion. How he used to practise throwing stones out of a sling, until he was very clever with it. Then tell how his elder brothers had gone to fight against a terrible enemy, and how his father had sent David with some bread and cheese for his brothers. Note that David did not leave his sheep to be neglected, for he got someone to take his place while he was away. Then describe how the brothers are angry at first at his leaving the sheep to come to where the battle was going on, but how, just at this moment, the loud voice of a great giant, Goliath, is heard asking if anyone will come out and fight him. Then tell how young David (who has practised with his sling until he can throw a stone with wonderful power and exactness) asks leave to try to kill the giant; how the king dissuades him, then afterwards giving his consent, he puts his own armour upon the lad. But it is too heavy, David cannot wear it; so, taking it off, he goes just as he is. Choosing five smooth stones he puts them in his shepherd's bag and, sling in hand, marches up to the giant Goliath. Tell the children how the giant scorns the lad, and how the lad stands firm, 'coming in the name of the Lord'; and how, when Goliath approaches, David throws his stones and strikes the giant on the forehead and so kills him. Thus the faithful

young shepherd, whose skill had hitherto been spent in protecting his sheep, was enabled to free his people from a terrible foe.

The first verse will be then repeated and afterwards sung; by this time the children will be familiar with the words and the tune.

LESSON III.

Question on last lesson, finishing by drawing a word picture of the fear of the flock when the roaring lion had carried off the lamb, and the mother sheep's delight at seeing it brought back to the fold in David's arms. What a brave lad he must have been? What a good thing he was by to take care of the sheep! Then the teacher may proceed somewhat in this manner: Shall I tell you a story of another shepherd to-day? Hold up your hands—let the right hand take hold of the left one—now keep them fast together and put them on your lap; if you hold them so they will not stray away and get into mischief like the little lambkin did. Now for the story of

ELLA AND THE SHEPHERD.

Away in the country, up among the hills, there lived an old shepherd. Such a tiny house he had to live in; there was only one room in it. In one corner was his bed, and in another corner was his fireplace. There was no chimney; but a hole had been made through the roof, and the smoke puffed out through it, except when the wind blew, and then the smoke puffed down

into the little room, which was not so pleasant. But the old shepherd did not mind, for he loved his little home, which he had lived in from a boy. Every night after he and Leo, his dog, had put all the sheep in the fold, they would come home and have their supper, and go to bed, Leo lying down close to his master's bed; and every morning, as soon as the sun rose, they got up and shared their breakfast together, and then, calling the sheep, they spent the whole day in the fields or on the hills. One evening the shepherd was returning home, when he missed Leo from his side. 'Leo, Leo,' he called. But the dog made no answer. The shepherd went back a little way. 'Leo,' he called again. Presently he heard a faint 'Bow-wow' in reply, the answer coming from below, where a steep, hilly cliff went down to the river. The shepherd was a capital climber, but this cliff was a very dangerous one; strong railings had been placed at the edge to prevent people from tumbling down. But the shepherd knew that Leo would not be down there without good cause, so he determined to follow. Drawing out of his pocket a strong piece of rope, that he always carried about with him, he fastened one end round a post, and the other round his waist; and then he clambered carefully down the cliff. Leo barked joyously when he saw his master. Soon the shepherd was close to his doggie's side, and there he saw—what do you think? A tiny, little child, wrapped up in a great shawl,

lying close to the water; and away up the stream, by the light of the moon, the shepherd could see a boat turned over. Alas! some poor fisherman had been drowned, and this little child evidently belonged to him. Now what was to be done? The good shepherd took it up in his arms; the little one was cold, and began to cry pitifully, but when it had nestled cosily down in the warm folds of the shepherd's cloak, the baby soon stopped sobbing. It was hard work getting up the steep cliff again, but the shepherd was surefooted, and before long he was at the top, Leo at his side, jumping round him and wagging his tail, as much as to say, 'Aren't you pleased with me to-night, master?' Into the little hut they went, and when the shepherd had laid down the tiny burden on his bed, he made up the fire and warmed some milk. That milk was to have been for his own supper, now it must be for the little one; and by the time it was ready the child had been freed from its wet things, and was lying in the good shepherd's arms, gazing, with large, wondering eyes, into his face. 'That's right, my darling,' said the good old man; 'you shall be my bairn now; mine and Leo's; shall she not, good doggie?' And Leo wagged his tail and thrust his shaggy head upon his master's knee, as if to say, 'Yes, master; won't it be fun to have a child to take care of as well as the sheep?' 'And a bonnie little girl it is, too,' said the shepherd; 'what shall we call her? I think we will call her

Ella, after my dear mother; shall we, Leo?' Leo seemed quite to understand, and, as he wagged his tail as if he would wag it off altogether, the shepherd took his answer to mean 'yes'; and Ella was the name chosen for the little foundling.¹

PART II.

And now began a new life for the shepherd. Each morning Ella had to be washed, and dressed, and fed, before the sheep left the fold. She was taken to the hillside with the flock, and a cosy place found for her to lie in. Very soon she was able to toddle about, following the shepherd and cuddling the little lambs, playing with them and laughing her merry, happy laugh, making the old shepherd gladder than ever that he had been given such a sweet little companion. So she grew up among the sheep with the shepherd, and as she grew older she went for long walks with the good shepherd, while Leo trotted after them.

One day they had been walking together for some time, and the chattering little tongue had been silent longer than usual. 'Ella,' said the shepherd, 'what are you thinking about?' 'Oh, father,' answered the child—for she always called him father—'I was only wondering!' 'Wondering about what, Ella?' 'I was wondering,' said the child, looking up into the old man's face, 'how it is that you know so much, and can do so much!

¹ If desirable, this lesson may be divided into two; the story being broken off here until the following Sunday.

Why, if the sheep are ill, you can doctor them; if they fall down, no matter how steep a place, you manage to get to them and bring them up again; and then, too, father, you can tell whether it will be a fine day or a wet day just by looking at the clouds. Only yesterday, when I wanted to go out, you pointed to a tiny cloud not bigger than my hand, and said that a storm would soon burst over us. Yes! I was glad that I had not gone, for within an hour, oh how it thundered! You take care of us all, father dear; I wish you had someone to take care of you!'

The shepherd bent down and kissed the little one, and said. 'But Ella, darling, there is someone who takes care of me.' Then seeing that she did not understand, he went on, 'Our Heavenly Father, he takes care of me, Ella.'

The child shook her head. 'How can. He, father, when you can't even see Him?'

'But I can hear his voice, Ella.'

'Can you; oh! let me hear it, too.'

'You can hear it, my child. God's voice is heard by all who listen to his messengers; He speaks through them.'

'Can you see God's messengers,' asked Ella, eagerly; and she looked round, expecting to see a white-winged angel, like there was in an old picture in the shepherd's hut.

'Yes, God's messengers are all round us,' answered the old man, gently. 'His voice is in the cloud and in the stars, teaching the times and seasons;

his voice is in the earth, teaching the secrets of the trees and flowers; his voice, too, speaks to my heart from your own lips, my little one, bringing me the greatest blessing of all, the gift of love,' and the old man took the child in his arms.

For a few minutes Ella said nothing, but only clasped her chubby arms round the shepherd's neck—then she asked, 'But, father, that is not just what I mean! The clouds, the stars, and all these things are always about, but they would be no good to you if you did not know about them all?'

'Surely, little Ella, surely; but did not the good God give us our eyes, and our ears, our legs, and our arms; and above all, has He not given us our hearts and our brains? If He gives us these, then we ought to be content, for what have we to do but to use them? And *you* know, Ella, that your feet and your legs get stronger as you use them; and so do all God's gifts. If we use what we have, they will increase and gain in power. Try to remember this, my child, and you will find that God's messengers are ever with thee!'

By this time they had reached home, where Leo, having run on before, was waiting to receive them with a bark of welcome. Ella helped the shepherd to get ready their supper of hot milk and oatmeal cake; and, before long, all three companions were sleeping happily in their little cot.

So they lived, Ella growing in strength, and in knowledge, and in

goodness year by year; so that the old man often blessed the day that brought her to him, 'God's golden-haired little messenger,' as he loved to call her.

The second verse of the hymn should now be taught, linking it on to the story by a few appropriate words. The children will easily be able to learn the verse; but if thought desirable, two lessons may be made upon it, as already suggested.

LESSON IV.

The lesson to-day is to be on 'Mother, and Mother's Love,' so after the questions, draw a picture of how sad it would have been for Ella if the shepherd had not been there to take mother's place; and how thankful children ought to be to have mother to look after them, and feed them, and clothe them; how they should obey her and trust her, because she knows what is best for them.

TOM AND BETTY.

Tom and Betty lived with mother and baby Nora in a tiny cottage near the sea. Their father was a sailor, and had been away for nearly a year. Sometimes he sent a little money over to mother, but it was not much, and often Tom and Betty felt they would have liked another slice of bread and butter for their tea, or another serving of pudding for their dinner, but they knew that mother had no more to give them.

And oh! how hard their mother worked. As soon as it was light she was up in the morning, busy making the rooms bright and clean; and then getting breakfast ready, so as to have everything cleared away, that she might sit down to do needlework, by which she was able to earn money for her little ones. She was always thinking about them, and trying to make them happy; so although the children had sometimes to go short of food, they were looked upon in the village as some of the luckiest there. Tom and Betty were very fond of Baby Nora, their little two-year-old sister; and it was their greatest treat to be allowed to take her out 'all by themselves,' and 'pretend she is our little girl, you know,' as they told each other. One fine afternoon they ran home and asked if mother would let them take Nora on to the beach to play on the sand. 'Can I trust you?' asked she. 'Indeed you may, mother,' cried Tom and Betty together. And so Nora's blue cotton bonnet was taken out of the drawer and put on; then, with brother and sister each taking one hand of their precious charge, the three went out of the door together.

And very soon they came to the sea shore, where the waves were dancing backwards and forwards in the sun, leaving behind them each time that they went back a line of white froth, with here and there a piece of seaweed entangled in it. Tom, Betty, and Nora were soon digging in the sand with their hands for spades, making a

great big castle, and for half-an-hour everything went well. But presently Tom heard something. 'Oh, Betty,' said he, 'I do believe that's Punch and Judy.' And he jumped up and found he was right; there was one man playing on the reeds, and another carrying the show, just turning round the corner.

Betty looked up. 'If Nora were not with us, we could run after it,' said she. Tom nodded, and then half whispered. 'Suppose we leave Nora just for a few minutes; she'll be happy enough with the sand, and we needn't stay long.' Betty looked at Nora and hesitated. She did so want to see Punch and Judy, and Nora would be all right—yes, she would go. 'Nora, dear,' said she, 'stay here a minute; Tom and Betty are only going a little way.' Nora did not answer, she was busy with her beautiful sand castle; and the brother and sister ran off, the excitement of the moment overcoming the guilty feeling which was at the bottom of their hearts.

Punch and Judy had just come to a standstill when the two children reached the little crowd, and the play was about to begin. How comical it was to hear Punch talking to Judy, and then, when the fighting began—ah! then there was no chance of thinking of anything or anybody until the whole entertainment was over.

And in the meantime, what was happening to Baby Nora? For a few minutes all went well; Baby was so busy that she did not mind not having her brother and sister near; but soon

the big castle was finished, and still they did not return; and now Norah began to be frightened and then to cry, as no one came when she called out. Baby Nora got up and toddled down towards the waves. 'Tum back, tum back; dou is naughty, velly naughty, to leave Baby Nora,' she cried. But alas, no one heard, and her little feet went toddling on towards the water.

I am afraid to think what would have happened if no one had come up just now; but fortunately Nora's mother, uneasy because her children were not back in time for tea, had put on her bonnet and come out to see where they were. When she reached the place where they always played, she saw the sand castle, but no children. Then turning to look nearer to the sea, she saw a little blue bonnet, and knew it must be Baby Nora. She ran, oh, so fast, down to the water's edge, and caught her little one up in her arms just as a big wave was going to break over her. As it was, it did come and wet them both, but Baby Nora was safe, and before many minutes were over, they were at home, and mother was undressing the tired little one by the side of a bright fire.

And Tom and Betty? Well, when the Punch and Judy show was over, the children remembered their little sister, and hurried back to the sea-shore. But Baby Nora was nowhere to be seen. Was she hiding? They called, and called. 'Nora, Nora, Baby

Nora!' But there was no answer. The two children looked at each other with white faces. 'Oh, Betty, where can she be?' cried Tom. And they both looked at the waves, and could not speak for fear. Then Betty put out her hand to Tom, and said in a low voice, 'Let us go at once to mother; she will know what to do.' So the two turned sadly homeward, hurrying with all their might. They rushed to the door, turned the handle, and then—then they saw Baby Nora herself, peacefully sleeping on mother's knee. Tom and Betty stood a moment in amazement, then they burst into tears, tears of sorrow, repentance, and joy. There was no need to scold, the result of their wrong-doing would never be forgotten by either; but when mother had tucked them into their little bed that night, and bent over them to give their good-night kiss, Tom and Betty threw both arms round her neck and cried, 'Mother, mother, we will never forget to-day!'

The third verse should now be taken, and the first three verses may then be sung.

LESSON V.

Draw forth from the children by your questions the lesson of the story of last week—the blessing of having a father and mother and friends to help and care for us, referring to the devotion of the shepherd to Ella, and to that of Tom and Betty's mother. Then continue the story.

TOM AND BETTY. PART II.

When mother had given Tom and Betty their good-night kiss and had left them, the two children were quite quiet for a little while. Then Betty said, 'Tommy, shall I tell you what I am thinking of?' 'Yes,' answered the boy. 'Well,' said Betty; 'it seems to me so dreadful to think that we can never, never undo what we did to-day, however we may try; and oh, Tommy, how dreadful it would have been if dear little Nora had been drowned, and all by our fault,' and Betty's voice was choked by her sobs.

'Oh, don't, don't,' answered her brother, 'I can't bear to think of it,' and he put his arm round her neck, and the two children cried together. Presently Betty began again, 'I wish we could *do* something to show mother that we are really sorry,' said she.

'Yes,' answered Tommy, 'yes, that would be the thing.' He thought a moment, and then exclaimed, 'I say, suppose we get up early in the morning, and make everything ready for breakfast before mother comes down; and then we will be ever so good all day long. And when we take baby Nora out we'll——'

But here Betty broke in, 'I'm afraid mother won't trust us to do that after to-day, Tommy.'

Tommy only hugged her again for an answer, and presently Betty went on, 'Still, Tommy, we will do as you say, won't we? At any rate that will be doing *something*.'

And the children kept their word.

It was scarcely daylight when they woke up, and dressed themselves very quietly, so that mother should not hear them, and then they went downstairs on tiptoe. Betty got the broom; it was rather heavy for her, but she swept the floor as well as she could, and was careful to go into all the corners, too, for mother always did that, she remembered. Tom raked out the cinders, cleaned the hearth, and lit the fire. Then he filled the kettle and set it on the hob, and by the time he had finished, Betty had swept and dusted the room. The children then laid the table for breakfast, and the last plate had just been put down, and the kettle was beginning to sing when they heard mother's step on the stairs. 'Let's hide under the table,' said Tom, 'and see what she thinks of it.' The next moment the children had hidden themselves, and mother came in. For a moment she stood there surprised; but soon the wonderment in her face turned to a soft joyous look, and happy tears came into her eyes as she felt what it all meant.

'What little fairies have been at work here?' she called out, 'I must search and see.' Behind the door she looked, and in the cupboard; no one was there; then she lifted the corner of the tablecloth and there were Tom and Betty. It was not long before baby Nora was fetched down, and all sat down happily to breakfast.

'Mother,' said Betty, 'we were peeping at you all the time; and I,—

I want to ask you something. Why did your face shine so, when you saw what had been done? And why did tears come into your eyes?’

Mother bent over Betty and kissed her. ‘Because,’ said she, ‘I saw my little children had been doing their best to show how sorry they were for yesterday.’

Tom and Betty looked up astonished. ‘But how did you know that we meant that—you did not hear us talking last night, did you?’

‘Nay, but a little fairy whispered it in my ear.’

‘Oh, mother,’ said Tom, ‘that is nonsense, you know there are no such things as fairies.’

‘Shall I say a little angel, or a heavenly messenger, then,—for they all mean the same thing. They all mean the voice of the good God who speaks to us by so many, many ways, and most of all by that spirit of love that He has placed within our hearts.’

Tom and Betty looked at each other. ‘And was it that which told you to save baby Nora, yesterday?’ asked Betty.

‘It was that which made me think of you all when you had gone out, and which made me feel anxious because you had not returned; and so we may well say it was that sweet fairy, or angel, or spirit—by whatever name you like to call the voice of God within us—which made me go to Nora.’

‘How glad you must be to have listened to that voice,’ said Betty, after a moment’s pause.

‘Indeed I am,’ answered her mother, ‘and I am glad, too, that my children listened also to the voice which bade them do their best after—after yesterday.’

A happy breakfast it was that morning, and when they had finished, mother said that she should do her work so much better to-day because she had had no house work to tire her before it. Then Tom called Betty into a corner, and some whispering went on. Presently the two came up, and Tom said, ‘Mother, Betty and I have been talking; we want you to let us do the house work every morning as we have done to-day, and then you will not be so tired.’

Betty added, ‘Do let us, mother; you always say we ought to help one another; and besides—besides it will make us remember—remember yesterday, mother,’ the child stammered.

Mother looked at her two children, and the ‘shiny look,’ as Betty had called it, came again into her eyes, as she told them how gladly she would accept their loving help, calling them both her little fairy messengers, through whom the good God was sending the best blessing of her life.

The fourth verse should now be taught; the meaning of which has been illustrated by the story.

LESSON VI. THE KING.

After a little chat and questioning upon the shepherd in his hut, and the mother in her cottage, the teacher may

begin to speak of the king in his palace. The children will remember the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, and a reference to that will introduce the subject. Draw from them what they think kings and queens do. Have they *anything* to do except wear a crown and sit on a throne? May they do what they like? Only in the same way that men and women, boys and girls, can do as they like—namely, when they *like* to do what is right. And if kings and queens like to do all that is right for the head of the nation to do, they will be very busy; always planning for the good of their people, and always doing their best to secure the happiness of the nation which they govern.

KING ALFRED.

More than a thousand years ago there was a king in England called Alfred; and though it is so many years since he lived, we still like to talk about him, for he was good and true, and did so much for his people.

King Alfred had once been a little boy, just like other little boys. He was happy in having a good mother, who took care of him and helped to make him strong, and wise, and brave. When he grew to be a man and was king, he did not have a big kingdom to rule over as our queen has; he did not even have the whole of England, for in those days the country was in the hands of several rulers. But even to the piece of England that King Alfred ruled, an enemy came and tried to take it away from him. We may

read many stories about King Alfred during the time that he was in trouble. Once, we are told, when he had nothing to eat but a loaf of bread, a poor man came up, who was very hungry, and asked for a share of the bread, not knowing to whom he was speaking; the king was hungry, too; but he looked at the man and had pity on him; then he cut the loaf in two and gave half of it to the poor man. It seems strange to think of a king having only dry bread to eat, and not too much of that, does it not? but those were hard times, for there was war in the land, and war always makes trouble; but it is good to know that even in trouble our good king ministered to the needs of others. Well, Alfred was very anxious to get rid of the Danes (for so the enemy were called); for he knew his people could not be happy while fighting was going on. If only he knew what the Danes meant to do, he would be able to make his plans to conquer them; but how could that be done? He thought and thought about it, until he decided what to do; he would disguise himself, and take his harp, which he could play on so well, and make his way into the Danish camp. And he did this, too; don't you think he was very brave? for if the Danes had found out that the harp player was King Alfred, they would soon have put him to death. But, happily, they did not find it out; and as he played he listened, and heard all what the Danes meant to do; then he made his way back; and be-

cause of what he had learnt, King Alfred was able to defeat the Danes and to win peace for his people. And the best of it was that the Danish chief was so pleased with King Alfred, that they afterwards became great friends.

King Alfred was always planning how to make his people good, and wise, and happy; and he succeeded so well that it used to be said that the men and women of the land grew to be so honest in his reign, that jewels might be hung on the trees without fear of anyone stealing them.

Ah ! he is good and just,
Wise are his laws,
So rejoice, every voice,
For there is cause.
Well may they trust him,
Love and obey,
For he cares, yes, he cares
For them each day.

Do you not think those words might be sung of our good King Alfred ?

The children should now be taught the fifth verse.

LESSON VII.

It will be well, perhaps, to spend this afternoon in going over the former lessons, and in perfecting the verses already learnt. The parable of the Talents (*Matt.* xxv. 14-29) may be taken as the story; the teacher pointing out that the Shepherd and Mother illustrate the servants with the two talents. They had each done what they could, and so were worthy of the commendation of their

lord; King Alfred had the five talents, and he, having done his very best with the gifts entrusted to him, might well have heard the words: 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.'

LESSON VIII.

After the teacher has referred to the blessing that comes to a country when a good king reigns over it, she may turn to the other side of the picture, and show how sad it is when a bad king has the power in his hands.

KING JOHN.

To-day I want to tell you something about another king, who was not at all like the good Alfred. Alfred had been dead many years, and all sorts of changes had come over our country of England when King John came to the throne.

He was a very clever man in many ways, and it is said that he had wonderful power of making friends, but he did not keep them, for he was selfish, cruel, and tyrannical. Indeed, he had no right to be king; for his nephew, Prince Arthur, ought to have had the crown; but John had him killed so as to get him out of the way. (The story of Hubert and Prince Arthur may be given, or, if the children are old enough, the scene between those two might be read from Shakespeare's *King John*.)

He thought that a king might do just what he liked; when he wanted money, he made the people give it to him, no matter how they had to suffer

for want of it. If they did not do what he wanted, he would order them to be put in a dark prison and let them starve to death, or kill them in some other way.

At last the people determined to resist this cruel man; and they took him a paper which his father had signed when he was king, in which he had promised that they should have many things allowed them; and they asked John to promise to do the same. But the king refused; he did not want them to have any power.

It is a bad thing for a land when the king quarrels with the people, and John had now to find out that even the king may not do just what he likes. No one would help him; and so at last he was forced to do what his barons wanted, and sign what is called the *Magna Charta*, a paper which gave the people certain powers and privileges; and in it twenty-four barons were appointed to see that the king did what he promised. Oh! how angry John was. It is said that after he had signed the paper he flung himself on the floor and gnawed sticks and straw in his rage.

And it is sad to have to tell you that even this did not teach the king to be more just. For as soon as he could, he said that this *Magna Charta* was to be done away with. Then the chiefs of the people would have nothing to do with so dishonourable a man, and many of them asked another king to reign over them. King John found himself deserted on

all sides, and at last, hated and neglected by those who had been his friends, he died alone and unregretted.

Is not that a sad story? And yet it is good for us all to know that we cannot do wrong and be happy; God will not have it so, and his laws are the same for the king upon his throne, as for the poor man at his palace gates.

The sixth verse may now be learnt.

LESSON X.

We now come to the gathering up of the whole series of lessons. Remind the children of the good shepherd, and tell them of the ancient psalmist, who looked to God as his shepherd; the twenty-third psalm may be read (or better, recited) if the teacher feels she can give it sympathetically; the words are so beautiful that children can *feel* the meaning, even though they cannot understand all the words. Next, speak of the Kingship of God. He alone, may be said to be always able to do as He likes, because He alone, being Goodness, Wisdom, and Love, wills to do what is right. We may trust his laws because they come from Him, who is absolutely trustworthy.

Lastly, refer to Tom and Betty and their good mother. God takes care of His children better than the best mother, better than the best father. Then tell the story of the Prodigal Son (*Luke* xv. 11-32) as simply and dramatically as you can, and after that teach the last verse.

AUNT AMY.

Rabbi Ben Ezra.

IN approaching the study of any poem the teacher comes with a particular attitude of mind. Others may choose to read the work because of its beauty of language, its moving story, or its fine imagery; but the teacher draws near seeking for thoughts and lines that will build up character, strengthen the will and the affections, and make more vivid the conscience. Of this class of poetry our age has been exceptionally productive. Many are the songs instinct with vigour for the soul's life, to the first reading of which countless men and women look back with joy, for from that hour they are able to trace a new sense of their life's worth to them. Such poems dealt with by the teacher in a sympathetic spirit become some of the most abiding forces for the dissolution of evil, and begin an influence which can only cease with life. Again and again will the powerful lines of a great poem be found to spring up at some important moment, and the spirit be braced anew in the wrestle for righteousness.

One of these poems, and a typical one, is Browning's 'Rabbi Ben Ezra,' a constellation of bright thoughts all moving round one main idea, which, when grasped, is capable of turning the weakest character into one of strength, and therefore is of immense importance to every teacher who would

feather the arrows of morality with illustrations from poesy.

It grapples with the greatest of all human problems—the present meaning and the ultimate purpose of our life on earth. Philosophy has worked for ages at this mine of mystery, but has never brought to earth a clearer diamond than this gem of Hebrew thought. For after all Browning's Rabbi simply expresses the best of Jewish vision: he does not strive to turn our eyes away from the common actualities of life; he loves the world as the stage on which this present life must play quite through one part: the thought of the life beyond is hardly hinted at, so intent is he on seeing that all here is turned to its fullest use and glory. Other poems may deal with the side issues of life, or enter into the Christian doctrine and problem of eternal being; but this one utterance is fixedly held to the one point around which all other things resolve—What is demanded of me in this life, or what am I living for?

The older man is talking to a young questioner, and speaks with the certainty of one who is now within sight of the goal, and his very first line expresses the gist of the poem.

Grow old along with me !
The best is yet to be,
The last of life for which the first was made:
Our times are in his hand
Who saith 'A whole I planned,
' Youth shows but half ; trust God : see all,
nor be afraid !'

For youth is troubled with idealism,

and is therefore hasty. The things that are not plain to it to-day youth turns upon with sharp questions and keen scepticism, and would fain imagine how all things should be in order to be perfect. This temper of mind is only natural to youth, and the Rabbi is wisely tolerant of it: he does not condemn it as the narrow bigot would.

Rather I prize the doubt,
Low kinds exist without,
Finished and finite clods untroubled by a
spark.

It is precisely this creative quality of youth's imagination that foretells the possible greatness of the life when it is complete. The animal world generally asks no such questions; is mutely, stupidly content merely to receive, and makes no endeavour to turn gifts to higher uses. Well then may we

Rejoice we are allied
To that which doth provide
And not partake, effect and not receive !

This is man's pride that his realm of thought being infinite it reaches out beyond the merely physical and receptive and becomes more the kin of God, 'Who gives, than of his tribes that take, I must believe.'

Hence it comes that all struggle and effort may rightly be appraised very highly: for do they not signify the restless progress of the soul, and mark its advance towards the fuller knowledge that will come with the well-used days?

Then welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough,

Each sting that bids, nor sit nor stand,
but go !

Be our joys three parts pain !
Strive, and hold cheap the strain ;
Learn, nor account the pang ; dare, never
grudge the throe !

It is as Abt Vogler says, in another of Browning's poems,

What is our failure here but a triumph's
evidence

For the fulness of the days? Have we
withered or agonised ?

Why else was the pause prolonged but that
singing might issue thence ?

Why rushed the discords in but that har-
mony should be prized ?

So that the need of endurance and endeavour becomes apparent, and youth may learn to be more satisfied with the necessity of the imperfections he has been criticising, for through their existence he was enabled to greatly aspire, and all that he sought to be, whether attained or not, is a comfort to him, for it assures him that he has at least *chosen* to rise.

A brute I might have been, but would not
sink i' the scale.

And surely it is the spirit of a man, and not his simply physical abilities of hand and mind, that makes his greatness. While one prizes all God's gifts to us of eyes, ears, brain, and the rest, so that the heart must sometimes cry, 'How good to live and learn': yet no true man can help recognising the difference between his bodily and spiritual capacities. The soul 'in its rose-mesh pulled ever to the earth,' beholds the splendid effectiveness and surety of the physical faculties, and

sometimes longs for an equal ability. Taking a path so far from the ordinary ways of the earth, seeking development in a spiritual kingdom whose life and limits are so dimly perceived, endowed with gifts that glow and fade with mysterious uncertainty, the soul cannot but sometimes feel its separateness from the body, and doubt the body's power to help it.

Thy body at its best,
How far can that project thy soul on its
lone way?

And yet the Rabbi would guard the youth from turning ascetic. It will not do to count your spiritual gains alone, as though you had acquired them in spite of the body. Monkish separation of flesh and spirit must not be too readily admitted. The bird's song is wafted to you sometimes when he is on the wing: two very different powers in use: so is it with the man who best lives when soul and body work in perfect harmony. As Browning says in *La Saisiaz* :—

'But the soul is not the body:' and the
breath is not the flute;
Both together make the music: either
marred, and all is mute.

Thus far, then, has the Rabbi reached—that youth, a child of flesh and spirit, must well and wisely develop both: the healthy body and mind kept pure and strong will lead on to the glory of age, when the fire of youthfulness having burnt itself to ashes, and all the foolishness and blundering being past, 'what survives is gold': and the judgment of age will be ripe in wisdom.

Young, all lay in dispute; I shall know,
being old.

Those later days of the good, true, noble man will be, while 'still within this life,' lifted above its vexations and storms so that he can have the delight of comparing his life's accomplishments and judging them, and be able to say—

The Future I may face now I have proved
the Past.

Henceforth age will rather endeavour to understand than to do. There is so much to be learned, 'work enough to watch the Master work,' and the closing days of life will claim just a few absolute certainties for the soul's peace, such as the knowledge of 'the Right and Good and Infinite,' known as one knows one's hand to be one's own, and subject to no dispute.

Here, then, we have Browning portraying the life of man as one that ought to include all the passionate struggles of youth, in body, mind and spirit, and should culminate in a quiet, restrained and beautiful old age: it is as if the ideal must be to pass through activity to peace in this our life.

But what must a man, in looking back on his life, be able to read there? Must he have wrought great deeds, have proved himself one of the world's successes, left huge and lasting monuments to stare out Time? No. There is much in every noble life that no earthly scales would ever hold, too delicate, ethereal, to move the balance of our rough instruments. What sweet impulses, earnest resolves, are

made which the world never guesses,
and which only reach the ear of God.

Not on the vulgar mass
Called 'work' must sentence pass,
Things done, that took the eye and had the
price ;

* * * * *

But all the world's coarse thumb
And finger failed to plumb,
So passed, in making up the main account ;
All instinct's immature,
All purposes unsure,
That weighed not as his work, yet swelled
the man's amount ;

* * * * *

All I could never be,
All men ignored in me,
This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the
pitcher shaped.

This, then, is what we must be able to
see in our past if we would have true
peace for the soul: there must be
written on life's pages the beauties of
high attempts, of moments when we
gave the spirit freest play in penitence,
or gratitude, or good resolution, signs
that we knew and valued our divine
origin, 'a god, though in the germ.'
And then the scriptural symbol of the
Potter recurs to the poet's mind, and
he dwells on it with telling effect to
the conclusion of the poem. What, he
asks, could better reveal the aim of life
than this emblem of the Potter's wheel?
Into the world of usefulness the spin-
ning of the wheel sends out another
vase. It comes into being with the
impress of its divine Maker. Nothing
can now destroy it, for it has some
purpose to fulfil in the scheme of
things: it is bound up with its Creator:
'Potter and clay endure.' By his will
the vase was impressed with all the

signs of human life, from its early
joys, foreshadowed in 'the laughing
loves which ran around thy base' to
the 'skull-things in order grim,' em-
blems of body's decay which mark the
vase's rim. Yet these things are but
beginnings. The life well-lived, that
took in all the joys and sorrows of
earth which came to it, has not to
think of itself as Alpha and Omega.
We are here for a purpose, one that
must inspire us each time we think of
of it,—the one that moved St. Paul to
write, 'Whatsoever thou doest, do all
for the glory of God.'

Look not thou down but up!
To uses of a cup,
The festal board, lamp's flash and trumpet's
peal,
The new wine's foaming flow,
The Master's lips aglow!
Thou, heaven's consummate cup, what
need'st thou with earth's wheel?

In a sweet, lowly prayer the poem
ends: a prayer which only asks that
all life's busy days and dreams may be
enabled to end, by God's grace, in Him.

But I need, now as then,
Thee, God, who moulded men;
And since, not even while the whirl was
worst,
Did I,—to the wheel of life
With shapes and colours rife,
Bound dizzily,—mistake my end, to slake
thy thirst:

So take and use thy work:
Amend what flaws may lurk,
What strain o' the stuff, what warpings past
the aim!
My times be in thy hand!
Perfect the cup as planned!
Let age approve of youth, and death com-
plete the same.

EDGAR M. DAPLYN.



The Teaching of Religion in Sunday Schools.

THERE is no denying that the question of how best to provide for the efficient teaching of religion in our Sunday schools is one of considerable and increasing difficulty. Every step forward in our ordinary day school education, in some respects, increases rather than lessens the difficulty. Boys and girls are now better prepared to receive good, careful, methodical teaching, and they are also more quick to detect poor, slipshod teaching. It is to be feared that much of the religious teaching given even in Unitarian Sunday schools belongs to the latter category,—and this often through no fault of the teachers, but through sheer lack of knowledge and inability to meet the requirements of the present time.

It is fast dawning upon those who observe and reflect that a deep and wide change is gradually taking place in religion, and that the kind of teaching so long followed in Sunday schools is rapidly becoming antiquated and useless. Creeds and Catechisms

we have always tabooed; we have pleaded for Bible teaching, and have held that the books of the Old and the New Testament afforded a simple and reliable guide to faith. We now discover that to understand and appreciate the Bible aright, so as to make the lessons drawn from its pages true and helpful, is a task beyond the knowledge and skill of the average Sunday school teacher; while the deeper thought-problems which are at the root of all religious faith lie still further from his apprehension and his power of imparting to others. Every superintendent knows that the number of teachers capable of efficiently instructing boys and girls in the principles and faith of Unitarian Christianity is extremely limited.

The work done by the average teacher is good and admirable, so far as it goes, and I believe there will always be a place, and a very high place, for it. Faithful, kind-hearted teachers, who do not possess any special knowledge or gifts, may, by their sympathy and good-will, and by making use of the class-books and other aids now so plentifully supplied at Essex Hall, do most excellent work in building up the characters and inspiring the thoughts and lives of their scholars. But the average teacher cannot be expected to give lessons on the fundamentals of Theism, the growth and history of Dogma, the criticism and interpretation of the Bible, nor the reasons why we are Unitarians and not Trinitarians, Ag-

nostics, or Secularists. We must all admit that our Sunday schools contain very few teachers competent to undertake this very special and important work.

What is to be done? Shall we continue as we are, letting things take their chance; or shall we abandon this special work altogether, because it is so difficult? It would, in my opinion, be cowardly and wrong to think of shirking or abandoning the careful, systematic teaching of religion in our Sunday schools; and great injury is done to the children if this work is in any way neglected.

I am in thorough accord with those who plead for small classes where the teacher can study the individual attainments and capacities of the scholars and learn something of their home life as well. This is, no doubt, the ideal method of religious teaching, as of all other teaching, but it is, I fear, impossible of realisation. In no part of the country could teachers in sufficient numbers be found qualified to do the work as it ought and needs to be done.

What then? My own judgment and feeling lean towards giving the really fit and competent teachers of religion larger classes. It is of the utmost importance that whatever instruction is given in the principles of religion should be thoroughly sound and good: it should always be the best possible. It is wiser and better to have a large number of scholars well and efficiently taught by one competent teacher of religion, than to

have several smaller groups imperfectly or badly taught. It is possible that it may be necessary before long to completely overhaul and revise our Sunday school system of teaching, in view of altered needs and conditions.

I would make the Sunday school, in its ordinary routine and work, as much of a home as possible,—a place where the affections of the scholars would cling to and centre round, where happy and helpful friendships would be formed between the scholars themselves, as well as with their teachers. But this could surely be made to harmonise with some plan for the careful, skilful, and thorough teaching of religious principles by the minister, or by some capable and well-informed instructor. Arrangements might be made on special Sundays, or at a specified time every Sunday, for a series of brief, bright, collective lessons on the great questions of religion suited to the comprehension and adapted to the needs of children. To make these lessons suitable for the varying ages and intelligence of the scholars, it would be necessary to divide the school into perhaps three sections, excluding the infants—for whom a few simple verses, hymns, and stories are the best kind of religious teaching. These hints are offered to ministers, superintendents, and teachers, as points for consideration and discussion.

W. COPELAND BOWIE.

'IMPROVE the best, so shall your sons
Better what you have bettered once.'

Poem for the Children.

Our Band of Hope.

GREY AND WHITE.

There was once a rabbit with silver fur,
Her little grey neighbours looked up to her;
Till she thought with pride in the moonlit
wood

'The reason I'm white is because I'm good.'

'Oh, what shall I do?' cried a tiny mole,
'A fairy has tumbled into a hole;
It's full of water and crawling things,
And she can't get out, for she's hurt her
wings.'

'I did my best to catch hold of her hair,
But my arms are so short, and she's still in
there,
Oh! darling white rabbit, your arms are
long,
You say you are good, and I know you
are strong.'

'Don't tell me about it,' the rabbit said,
She shut up her eyes and her ears grew red,
'There's lots of mud and it's sure to stick,
Because my hair is so long and thick.'

'Oh dear! Oh dear!' sobbed the poor little
mole,
'Who will help the fairy out of the hole?'
A common grey rabbit popped up from the
gorse,
'I'm not very strong but I'll try, of course.'

His little tail bobbed as he waded in,
The muddy water came up to his chin,
But he caught the fairy tight by the hand
And sent her off safe into fairyland.

But she kissed him first on his muddy nose,
She kissed his face, and his little wet toes,
And when the day dawned in the early
light,
That little grey rabbit was shining white.

Selected.



RS. TEMPLAR sat by her
drawing-room fire with the
afternoon tea on a little
table beside her. There was
a look of restfulness about her as she
sat there with the fire-light glinting
on her white hair and on the silver tea
things which seemed to invite you to
come and talk to her.

Presently the gate clicked, and quick
steps came up the garden path. A
moment later a bright-faced girl of
twenty was ushered into the room.

'Oh, Mrs. Templar, I'm so glad to
find you alone. I want to have a
good talk.'

'I am quite ready, but take off your
jacket and come and have some
tea first.'

Thus adjured, Hester Churchill
slipped off her furry coat and settled
into a big chair by the fire. Then,
armed with a teacup, she began, 'I
want to do some work, Mrs. Templar,
something for other people if I can.
I haven't much spare time, because
mother wants me in the day time, but
I could give up some evenings I think.
I should like to try and start a Band
of Hope at our church, but I'm young
and not very clever. Do you think I
could manage it?'

Mrs. Templar looked at the bright
young face turned up to her inquir-
ingly, and said, 'Of course you could,
my dear, it only requires earnestness
and perseverance; and no work is more

blessed in its results. If we could only keep the rising generation from strong drink, the England of to-morrow would be a better, happier country than the England of to-day.'

'That's what I think,' said Hester shyly, 'and I should like to help a little towards it. I came to ask you how you manage your Band of Hope, for I know you have one at your chapel, and they say it is the largest and best managed in the town. Please tell me how it is worked.'

'There are so many helpers, now,' said Mrs. Templar, 'and such an able secretary, that it almost "runs itself," but in the beginning it was not so. In Band of Hope work, as in everything else, one must sow the seed first, then tend it diligently as it slowly grows into a plant; and this is the time for patience and cheerful hopefulness, for it is the time when there is a good deal of drudgery and the work does not seem to tell.'

'How did you start your Society?'

asked Hester.

'First of all I talked about it, and enlisted the sympathy and interest of two or three others, and then we arranged our plan of campaign. A young girl undertook to manage the musical part of the meetings, by means of a choir formed from the children themselves, and meeting weekly for practice. Our minister promised to help us, and our minister's wife agreed to be treasurer, and ask members of the congregation to be annual subscribers. Then I called on all the

parents of the Sunday scholars and invited them to send their boys and girls to the inaugural meeting, and said I hoped they would allow them to join our Band of Hope.

We wrote to the Band of Hope Union, 60, Old Bailey, and bought some copies of their 'Hymns and Songs,' with music, for our choir, and a hundred penny copies of the books with the words only for the children, also handsome pledge cards. Then we held our first meeting, opening it with a hymn and prayer, then talking to the children and asking them to join the new society. About thirty did so, and we came away feeling that we had made a good beginning.'

'Are all your workers abstainers?'

'Of course; how can you ask anyone to sign a pledge if you have not done so yourself?'

'But your subscribers are not all abstainers?'

'No, there is not the same reason for it. Of course I personally think it would be best for everyone to abstain, but I don't see why people who don't agree with me should not help the work with money, if they are large minded enough to be willing to do so.'

'How do you generally carry on your meetings?'

'We have as a rule three or four songs and hymns in which all join, led by the choir, a prayer, a short address, with several recitations and dialogues given by the children themselves. The preparation of these means real work. We have the children up at our own

houses and carefully train them to say their pieces and act their little temperance dialogues. Soon there is eager wish to take part, and the children feel pride in doing their best. I have often had twenty children in the kitchen at once, and it's "May I go in a dialogue?" "Will you find me a piece?" etc., and great is the clamour till all are suited. We have our meetings monthly all the year round, one person being chairman at each, responsible for preparing the children, choosing the hymns, and giving the address. Of course at first the work fell heavily on a few, the same person often having to get up about four meetings a year; but now there are so many willing to do it that it only comes once in a year or two to the same person. You see the children grow up, and in a few years they take their place as helpers.

'We have a large committee of twenty to thirty young people, most of whom were originally in the Band of Hope. We elect our officers annually. They consist of President, Vice-President, Secretary or Secretaries, Treasurer, and Choir Leader.

'The President is changed every year, and is chosen for the good work he or she has done for the society in the past year. The minister and his wife take turn with the rest. The duties of the President are to preside at the monthly committee meetings which are held after the Band of Hope, and on all special occasions.

'At the age of fourteen the members of the Band of Hope are moved up

into the adult Temperance Society. This holds its meetings once a month during the winter, and is managed on the same lines as the Band of Hope, only the addresses, etc., are arranged to suit older people. There is no charge for attending the Band of Hope.

'A roll call is read out at every meeting, and the names of all present marked down, and prizes for attendance given at the end of the year. A child making twelve attendances receives a shilling book, while those making eleven attendances have a six-penny one. Our prizes generally cost us about twenty-five shillings.

'In the Temperance Society we go on another principle. We no longer give prizes for attendance, but require a small subscription of at least a penny a year for membership. The Hon. Sec. visits every family once a year to collect their subscriptions, which amount in all to between two and three pounds. Most of our members voluntarily give more than the required penny, and we are always especially pleased when, as sometimes happens, lads who have gone away to sea or elsewhere still remember their old society affectionately, and send home their annual subscriptions to it.

'Besides these regular meetings, we hold others. There is an annual public meeting at which we invite a speaker from elsewhere to come and address our society. We advertise this by posters, and generally have a good attendance and a collection for our funds. Twice a year, when the fairs

are held in the town, we give a free dramatic entertainment with the object of keeping our own and other young people out of the streets at a time of special temptation. Refreshments are sold on these occasions in our downstairs rooms. A few nights after, a supper is held for our temperance committee and fair-night workers. We get it up ourselves, and it is very merry. The President sits at the head of the table, and speeches are made to the success of our society. Afterwards games take place. At Christmas there is an annual Temperance Tea (price fourpence) with games and acting afterwards, and in the summer we have one or two pic-nics, with temperance addresses in the open air before returning home. There is also a temperance Fife and Drum Band, which comes out strongly at all out-of-door festivities.

‘Our aim in all things is to inspire, instruct, and amuse. The prayer, the hymn, and the amusing play all find their place. Four times a year we hold a Band of Mercy meeting instead of the Band of Hope, using the same organisation for both. At times we get up a service of song, or a cantata, or we have a lantern entertainment, or show pictorial diagrams.

‘We are affiliated to the Essex Hall Temperance Association,¹ from whom we borrow slides and diagrams, etc., and from whom we get *Young Days* magazine for half-price.’

¹ Hon. Secs.: Mr. Bredall, 238, Barry Rd., East Dulwich, and Mr. A. W. Harris, 53, Lowden Road, Herne Hill.

‘How do you know what books, reciters, etc., to get? I should feel all at sea about that.’

‘For papers I should advise you to take in the *Band of Hope Chronicle*, one penny monthly, and the *National Temperance Mirror*, one penny monthly. But write to Mr. Bredall of the Essex Hall Temperance Association, and he will send you their list of recommended books, reciters, etc., which you will find very useful. He will be glad to help you by sending you a speaker, or by lending books, or in any way that is feasible; for the Association exists chiefly in order to help on work such as yours will be.’

‘Thank you so much, Mrs. Templar, I feel now as if I see my way better. I shall carry out your advice in every detail.’

‘No, my dear, I am not attempting to lay down hard and fast rules. Circumstances alter cases. In the main lines you cannot, I think, do better than plan the work as I have sketched it out, but the details might differ. Some Bands of Hope meet weekly, all the year round; some weekly during the winter months only. It is not necessary to give prizes for attendance; some societies give prizes for the best recitations, some for the greatest number of recitations given by one member in the year; some do not give prizes at all. Some take *Young Days* at half-price from the Essex Hall Temperance Association, sell it to the children at one penny, and give them a tea at the end of the year with the difference.

Each of these plans may work well. The plan of charging the children for attendance I do not like; I think the Band of Hope should be as open to all who like to join it as the Sunday School itself. Later on, when the little folks are grown lads and lassies, they will be glad to contribute something to help support their Society.'

'Well, I shall see. Anyhow you will come and speak at the first meeting will you not, dear Mrs. Templar, and I shall call my new Society, "The Templar Band of Hope," and you will be its godmother.'

'It is very good of you to say that, my dear, and I shall have great pleasure in being present at your first meeting; but as to the name I think you had better consult with your fellow-workers about that.'

'You must remember that though you may be the inspirer, and leading spirit in the work, yet you cannot carry it on alone, and you will find your helpers will have their own ideas about things. You must be careful never to ride rough-shod over anyone's suggestions. Let all say what seems to them best, then consider it together in the spirit of loving fellowship, and decide what plan is best. Having once decided it, follow it up patiently, cheerfully and persevering, and trust to God to bless your work.'

The little gate clicked once more, as Hester Churchill sallied forth, her bright face full of resolution as she thought of the Band of Hope that was to be.

VIOLET SOLLY.

THE SIN OF OMISSION.

It isn't the thing you do, dear,
It's the thing you leave undone
Which gives you a bit of heartache
At the setting of the sun;
The tender word forgotten,
The letter you did not write,
The flower you might have sent, dear,
Are your haunting ghosts to-night.

The stone you might have lifted
Out of the brother's way,
The bit of heartsome counsel
You were hurried too much to say.
The loving touch of the hand, dear,
The gentle and winsome tone
That you had no time nor thought for,
With troubles enough of your own.

These little acts of kindness,
So easily out of mind,
These chances to be angels
Which even mortals find—
—They come in night and silence
Each mild reproachful wraith,
When hope is faint and flagging,
And a blight has dropped on faith.

For life is all too short, dear,
And sorrow is all too great,
To suffer our slow compassion
That tarries until too late.
And it's not the thing you do, dear,
It's the thing you leave undone,
Which gives you the bitter heartache,
At the setting of the sun.

MARGARET E. SANGSTER.

'KNOW, then, that the resolve, persistently maintained, to make the best of that which we have and are, would make of hell itself a heaven; and how much more of earth! While ever to make the worst of things would turn heaven itself into a hell. The mind is its own bliss or woe.'

EDWARD MAITLAND.

Twelve Lesson Notes on the Life of Paul.

THESE notes are chiefly biographical. They are not critical, but deal with the subject matter of the Acts of the Apostles, so far as the book tells the story of the travels and sufferings of the great missionary of the Gentiles.

Much interesting information about Tarsus, Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, etc., may be obtained from Farrar's book, *The Life and Work of St. Paul*, and from Robertson's short sketch, *Scenes from the Life of St. Paul*, on which these notes are largely based.

It is hoped that they will be useful not only in the preparation of Sunday school lessons, but also in giving a Lantern Lecture on Paul, for which excellent slides may be easily hired.

LESSON I.

STONING OF STEPHEN AND CONVERSION OF SAUL. ABOUT 35 A.D.

Read *Acts* vii. 54 to viii. 3, and ix. 1-25. Use Revised Version if possible.

MEMORY VERSE.—'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.'

We must regard Stephen as in many respects the forerunner of Paul. The people listen patiently to his speech till, towards the close, he tells how aforetime their fathers had persecuted the prophets and how they themselves had slain the Righteous One. He saw in Jesus the Messiah, and his whole

being was filled with the thought of him—his face lit up with a great truth, but he had to pay the penalty for his outspoken opinions. Evil passions were against him. He was stoned to death. He died breathing the prayer of forgiveness for his murderers, with the name of Jesus upon his lips. Standing by, in charge of the clothes of the perpetrators of the dark deed, urging them on, was a young man, Saul. The term 'young man' is indefinite; he must have been at least thirty years of age. Little did he think of the change that was to come over him, how in after years he could never think of the part he played then and immediately after in persecuting the brethren, without feelings of shame and contrition. But God brought good out of evil. Stephen did not die in vain, and neither does any high-souled man or woman die in vain. He influenced Saul, though no trace of this could be seen at the time. There was his heroic example. He died, but his cause lived on. Truth and right triumph eventually. The power of his personality was upon Saul, though he knew it not. But he would begin to feel that there must be something in a cause which could so enable one to die. Might he not possibly be in the wrong? Away with the thought—toleration was disloyalty—he must be the more zealous to stamp out the hateful heresy.

Saul was a native of Tarsus, the metropolis of Cilicia. He was a Roman citizen—free-born. His father must have been pretty well-off. He

gave his son a good education, and according to Jewish custom, he brought up his son to a trade, that of tent-making—*i.e.*, the weaving of cilicium, a kind of goat's-hair cloth. He knew nothing about his mother, but he had a married sister apparently living in Jerusalem at a later time. Very early on he would begin to learn the Scriptures and to study the law. Beautiful scenery surrounded his home, but he does not appear to have been influenced by it. He probably left Tarsus when he was twelve years old to study in the school of Gamaliel at Jerusalem. He would be instructed in Greek and Hebrew, and might be taught some Latin, but his studies would be chiefly in the Jewish Scriptures. We do not know how long he remained at school, but he probably left the city long before Jesus began his ministry. How he spent the intervening years between leaving school and his appearance as a leader of the persecuting party at Jerusalem we have no means of determining. When our story opens he is acting in the latter capacity. He is a member of the Jewish Council—the Sanhedrin—venting his bigotry and passion on those who were of the Way—the believers in Messiah. Many of them had been hounded out of Jerusalem, some had doubtless found a home in Damascus. Saul gets permission to visit the last-named with the object of bringing all heretics he could find back to Jerusalem. The distance from one city to the other was one hundred and thirty-six miles

—a week's journey for a caravan—but if done on horseback it would take less time.

Three accounts are given in *Acts* of the Conversion of Paul. There is a difference in minor details—but in substance all agree. The reality of the conversion is established beyond all shadow of doubt, although we may not be able to say what the precise experience was. It meant an utter, absolute surrender—a change to the very centre and core of his being. That is the fact—and all else is of slight account when compared with it. Several ways of accounting for the conversion have been suggested which space will not allow us to consider. It may be that the work of conviction had all been done beforehand. It may be Stephen's words and death had been exercising a strange and persistent influence over Saul's mind and soul. It may be that the leaven of Christianity was at work within before the vision appeared. Some weeks had elapsed since Stephen's death, and a journey of several days' duration would give occasion for reflection. To me it seems to be an illustration of a divine invitation which could not be slighted, of a call, a command from on high which could not be withstood, nor disobeyed, right and truth, goodness and love, asserting their power and majesty—God manifesting himself to his erring, wayward child.¹

¹ Compare the account of Luther's conversion given on page 58, *Scenes from the Life of St. Paul*, also that of Sampson Staniforth, a Methodist soldier, in Matthew Arnold's *St. Paul and Protestantism*, page 36.

Saul is stricken down helpless. His bodily powers give way before the intense agonies his mind undergoes. Blind and speechless he is led into Damascus. Ananias visits Saul. It is probable that he and Saul were previously acquainted at Jerusalem. He might have heard of the coming visit. We are not told if any of Saul's friends knew of his arrival, nor is any information given as to the subsequent doings of Saul's companions by the way. After a short time Saul preaches Jesus as the Messiah in the synagogues.

Between verses 22 and 23 of chapter ix. we must place the visit to Arabia referred to in *Gal. i. 15-17*. This term Arabia is vague. It probably refers to some district not far from Damascus. Its object we may surmise fairly accurately. The convert conferred not with flesh and blood: he took council of God. There had been the struggle attending his conversion—the severing of old friendships—the changed outlook, the new life and experience. He needed rest and quietude to think out his course. Solitude to fight and conquer all doubts and misgivings. What the wilderness of Judea was to Jesus, so was the desert of Arabia to the disciple. Quietude is necessary for thought and prayer and to strengthen the higher life.

We are not sure how long the sojourn in Arabia lasted. Saul returned to Damascus and began in earnest his work of preaching. But the Jews plotted against him, wishing to have his life. They watched his movements

constantly, but they were foiled in their designs by the faithfulness of Saul's friends. By night he was let down from the city wall in a basket, and fled away to Jerusalem, which place he reached in safety. He went forth as a persecutor—he returned as a fugitive, and all but friendless, looked upon by many with hatred, and by others with suspicion—but Barnabas stood by his side and spoke to the brethren on his behalf.

LESSONS.—Forgiveness of injuries; steadfastness to truth and right; the evils of intolerance and persecution; the power of personal example; fighting against God—evil habits, thoughts, ways, deeds; the need of thoughtfulness, meditation, prayer, in developing the higher life.

LESSON II.

BARNABAS AND SAUL—THE DISCIPLES
NICKNAMED CHRISTIANS AT ANTIOCH.

MEMORY VERSE.—‘For he was a good man, and full of the holy spirit and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.’

Read *Acts ix. 26-31, xi. 1, 19-30, xii. 25*.

As at Damascus so at Jerusalem, Jewish enemies soon conspired together to kill Saul. He was again saved by the zeal and care of his friends. He left Jerusalem, went to Cæsarea and thence to Tarsus. He was not one to flee from a situation because it was dangerous, but doubtless, in this case he acted for the best. We do

not know how he spent his time after his return to Tarsus. He may have preached more or less, or he may have thought in silence of the profound change which had come over him, and have more fully considered his plans for the future. If his father and mother were still living we wonder how they viewed his conversion. They may have grieved that their son should have turned heretic.

Some years elapsed before Barnabas went all the way from Antioch to Tarsus to invite Saul's help in the work of preaching, and before his active missionary career began. Barnabas was a native of Cyprus, a Jewish convert. The invitation to go to Antioch Saul accepted, and there he and Barnabas remained a year. There the gospel was first preached to others as well as Jews—'unto the Greeks also.' Antioch became the centre of the Gentile churches. The church there was broader than the church at Jerusalem, to which none but Jews had been admitted. Antioch was called Theopolis—city of God—and was for many centuries the capital of Christendom. (See Farrer and Robertson.) There the disciples were first nicknamed Christians—a term of derision, reproach, hatred, applied by others; it became before long a title denoting endurance, heroism—victory in a great, though a persecuted cause. The brethren at Antioch made a collection on behalf of the brethren in Judea, which they sent by the hands of Barnabas

and Saul. They did not stay long in Jerusalem, but returned to Antioch, taking with them John Mark, who was the nephew of Barnabas. The church at Antioch realised the universality of the gospel message. The gospel was for all nations. It was the one against the many, but truth was on its side, and so its position was sound and its policy ultimately prevailed.

The words attributed to Agabus were no doubt 'founded on the observation of natural signs.' We are assured that the reign of Claudius was remarkable for famines in different parts of the world, and Josephus records a famine which took place in Judea at this time.

LESSONS.—Those who are in earnest are not afraid of hard names and cynical remarks. Speak of others who were nicknamed. The followers of George Fox were called Quakers; the followers of John Wesley, Methodists—terms which at first denoted scorn. Some time seems to have elapsed before the term Christian was adopted by the Christians amongst themselves—they used such names as 'the brethren,' 'the disciples,' 'the believers,' 'the saints,' 'the faithful.' What does Christianity stand for?—for God, his love, mercy, and forgiveness; for men, their sonship to God and their brotherhood each one with the other. Christianity is personal loyalty to Jesus. Who are Christians? Those who try to carry out the principles of Jesus. Instances of applied Christianity: re-

form of prison system, abolition of American slavery.

Would that there were a just and true, a sound and wholesome spirit of Christianity abroad in the world—the spirit of self-denial and self-control, helpfulness and love. Let us try to make it as universal as we can by having it within ourselves, by making our own heart and life, with God's help, as pure and as good as we can. If all would do this what peaceful homes and schools, and what a delightful world we should have.

LESSON III.

THE FIRST PREACHING JOURNEY, ABOUT 46 A.D.

Read *Acts* xiii. 1-52.

MEMORY VERSE.—‘And the word of the Lord was spread abroad throughout all the region.’

It would be impossible to estimate the significance of the first missionary journey with regard to the social and political, the moral and spiritual advancement of mankind. Christianity from the first was a missionary religion, and so must it ever be,—aggressive against all ignorance and superstition, against falsehood and wrong, against oppression and injustice. Its work must be carried on in the spirit of its founder, and its distinguished spreader. They were animated by no feelings of personal ambition and selfish aggrandisement, were attended by no vain pomp and show. They went forth with singleness of purpose, full of zeal

and enthusiasm, of faith and love, intent only on helping and blessing others. It will be well to follow the course pursued by Barnabas and Saul, with a good map. They leave Antioch and go to Cyprus by way of Seleucia. Cyprus had long been an island of great importance because of the production of timber, corn, wine, oil, flax, diamonds, lead, copper, etc. They landed at Salamis, where lived many Jews, and thence journeyed across the island to Paphos, a distance of about one hundred miles. There lived the Roman Governor, Sergius Paulus, and there the missionaries encountered the sorcerer, Bar-Jesus, who was a Jew. The Governor, although an educated Roman, was grossly superstitious, as indeed were many Romans, and the old religious ideas had ceased to have any serious hold upon them. They were, however, eager for signs, ready for novelties and sensations. Hence it was that Sergius Paulus could tolerate and doubtless enjoy the things which the Magus, the sorcerer, said or did; hence, also, out of a feeling of curiosity he sent for Barnabas and Saul, wondering what they had to say. He was evidently moved by what he heard. The sorcerer perceived this and laboured to remove the impression from the Governor's mind. Saul was angry, and his words of rebuke seem to have had a strange effect upon the sorcerer. Probably Saul thought that he, being a Jew, ought to have been above such base deception, and the encouragement of superstitious beliefs. We read that

the Governor was so impressed that he believed.

At this point in our story we notice that Saul's name suddenly changes to Paul. We do not know exactly why this should be. It may have been one of the names he was entitled to use by virtue of his Roman citizenship, which he did not actively adopt till the present time. It is the name which he always used, or by which he was called, subsequently.

We notice also that he becomes the leader henceforth, and Barnabas takes a subordinate part.

From Paphos, Paul and his company sailed to Perga in Pamphylia, and here Mark's courage failed him, and he returned to Jerusalem. Paul was greatly disappointed; and he refused at a later time to take Mark with him, which led to an unfortunate rupture between himself and Barnabas.

Leaving Perga, the missionaries set out for Antioch in Pisidia. We are told that this was a very dangerous journey to undertake, and this might be the cause of Mark's faintheartedness. The travellers were exposed to 'perils of robbers,' and to 'perils of rivers.' The inhabitants of the country were wild and lawless, much given to robbery, and the rivers were subject to sudden and overwhelming floods. But duty was not to be shirked, even if it led where danger lay.

Not many Jews resided in the Pisidian Antioch, which Paul and his friends reached in safety. There was only one synagogue, which Paul, ac-

cording to custom, visited. He was invited to speak, and standing up 'and beckoning with the hand,' preached Jesus as the Messiah announced by prophets, whom God had raised from the dead whole and undefiled. 'Through this man,' he went on to say, is proclaimed the forgiveness of sins, and belief in him procured a justification which the works of the Law of Moses could never accomplish, since, he would have added, 'they could never all be done.' There we have a short and concise statement of Paul's theology, tinged as it is with his previous Jewish training, but we are concerned at present more with the life of Paul than his teachings. Still it is well to take some note of the character of the gospel message which sounded forth into so many different parts of the earth then and shortly afterwards—the man Jesus—the Christ—the anointed of God—the chosen deliverer of the race—in whom belief, the mystical union of master and disciple, stirred, developed and sustained a higher and diviner life amongst men.

Paul's preaching made a great sensation, and many gathered about him at the close of the service for further conversation. The following Sabbath, having been invited to remain for it, a large congregation assembled to hear him, and were again favourably impressed. The jealousies of the conservative-minded Jews were aroused. They would have none of Paul's preaching. They openly contradicted him. Paul and Barnabas were not

afraid, however. Their consciences were clear—if Jews would not receive their message, Gentiles would; and to them they turned and spoke with much acceptance. Thereupon the Jews stirred up persecution against them, and ‘cast them out of their borders.’ For the present their work was done in that place, and they set out for Iconium.

LESSONS.—The missionary religion, the true missionaries—who are they? Are you one? If not, why not? Superstition dies slowly. Illustrate. Credulity is not faith. On enduring hardness. The anointed of God. Discipleship. Law versus loyalty and love.

LESSON IV.

PAUL AND BARNABAS AT LYSTRA.

Read *Acts* xiv.

MEMORY VERSE.—‘We also are men of like nature with you, and bring you good tidings, that ye should turn from these vain things unto the living God, who made the heavens and the earth, and the sea, and all that in them is.’

Iconium in Lycaonia was duly reached—a journey of some sixty miles length, over a wild and dreary plain. Here the missionaries found a synagogue of the Jews and spoke to a crowd of Jews and Greeks, many of whom believed. Here as in other places, jealousy and strife soon made their appearance. The multitude were divided—some agreed with the apostles and others did not. It was manifest that their lives were in jeopardy and

so they fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia. At Lystra they came face to face with the ancient mythology which amongst a simple, ignorant people was still sincerely accepted. This was proved after Paul had exerted that healing power, which he seems to have undoubtedly possessed, upon the cripple ‘who never had walked.’ The people cried out that the gods had visited them in the form of men. Barnabas they thought was Zeus, the king of gods and men, and Paul was Hermes the god of eloquence. Paul and Barnabas could not understand what was taking place till the priest of Hermes appeared with oxen and garlands as a sacrifice unto them. Then they grasped the situation, and rending their clothes in token of their utter disapproval, Paul broke forth ‘We are men of like nature with you.’ He exhorts them to turn to the one living God who needed no such offerings, whose goodness had made all things, whose beneficence was declared in fruitful seasons and glad hearts. Even when he had finished ‘scarce restrained they the multitudes from doing sacrifice unto them.’

Presently Jews arrived from Antioch and Iconium saying that Paul and Barnabas were trying to mislead them. The people were credulous and easily persuaded, and their respect, such as it was, was changed into hatred, in this way furnishing an instance of the fickleness of the multitude. Paul was stoned and thrown out of the city as being dead. What had been the fate

of Stephen had to all appearance come upon him. But he gradually revived, re-entered the city, and the following day set out for Derbe with Barnabas.

Apparently his ministry there was successful. How long it lasted we do not know. The missionaries went no further. They returned to Antioch by a very roundabout way, visiting the places where they had previously preached—Lystra, Iconium, Antioch—passing through Pisidia and Pamphylia to Perga and on to Attalia, when they sailed for Antioch in Syria. So ended the first missionary journey, and we can well believe that the disciples at Antioch gave the wanderers a right good welcome home.

LESSONS.—Stories of healing of certain diseases seem to be authentic,—instances of will, or mind, or soul rising above body. They abound in works of religious biography. May not miracles and tales of marvellous occurrences have grown out of them? Stories of healing form the substratum of fact.

Popular favour is sometimes of fleeting duration. But truth, like honesty, admits of no degrees. If popularity can only be got at the cost of principle then let popularity go. Illustrations: John Bright and his Manchester constituents; John Morley at Newcastle; Lloyd Garrison and the Liberator.

Contrast the first preaching journey with its results as seen to-day, the world-wide existence of Christianity. The germ and the ever widening harvest. Latter-day missionaries: Moffat, Livingstone, Coleridge-Patteson.

LESSON V.

THE CONFERENCE AT JERUSALEM AND THE BEGINNING OF THE SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY.

Read *Acts* xv. and xvi.

MEMORY VERSE.—‘Come over into Macedonia and help us.’

Year of Conference about 51, and second journey about 51—54.

We cannot offer many details as to the objects of the ‘counter mission,’ as it is called. This is certain, that a stubborn resistance was offered to Paul by certain Judaizers from Judea, who maintained the absolute necessity of Jewish rites and customs, the chief of them being circumcision. Paul maintained that Gentiles, on becoming Christians, did not come under the bondage of the Law. They could be Christians without first becoming Jews. The Judaizers visited amongst other places, Antioch, sowing dissension and strife amongst the brethren in their crusade against Paul’s teaching. Did these men represent the official feeling of the church at Jerusalem, or were they speaking as so many individuals? That is a large and complicated question which cannot fully be discussed here, and very different answers are given to it. The brethren at Antioch thought the leaders of the church at Jerusalem should be consulted in the matter, and Paul and Barnabas and certain others were appointed to confer with them. They went, and the conclusion, according to the account given in *Acts*, was a sort of compromise.

Peter and James and John extended the right hand of fellowship to Paul, and the Gentile converts were not to be troubled about circumcision, but were enjoined to abstain from idolatry and to give up unclean habits and unclean foods. That point being settled, Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch, and with them went Silas and Judas, to communicate or bear witness to the conclusion arrived at, which was duly made known; and Silas appears to have remained at Antioch.

After a time, Paul and Barnabas resolve to again visit the brethren in every city wherein they had preached during their missionary travels, and so the second journey is planned. At this point Paul and Barnabas quarrel and separate, the former not being willing to include Mark in his company. Barnabas went to Cyprus, taking Mark with him, and Paul, choosing Silas, went through Syria and Cilicia. He probably went through the pass known as the Cilician gates, a journey full of awful dangers, so much so that the crusaders subsequently called it 'The Gates of Judas.'

Paul went first to Derbe and then to Lystra, at which place lived the convert, Eunice, who had married a Greek, whose son Timothy became one of Paul's most devoted helpers. We are told that he was circumcised, and by Paul. If this were so, Paul's action seems to be inconsistent with language he used in his letters, in places where he speaks of the futility of the rite. Still he may have so acted for the sake of

peace (*Rom.* xiv. 19, *1 Cor.* ix. 20-22), sacrificing a precious conviction so as to preserve some sort of unity. Had he pleased himself the Jews might have been more violently opposed to him than ever. All social intercourse might have been denied to Timothy since it was known that he was of mixed descent.

The missionaries pursued their way through Phrygia and Galatia. They purposed entering Bithynia, but changing their plans, they passed through Mysia and came to Troas. The preaching had as yet been confined to Asia. There, across the Ægean Sea, lay Europe, so far the scene of no active missionary labours. Doubtless Paul would feel drawn to that vast country, as yet untilled. His thoughts would go in that direction, and thus the wandering ideas of the busy day took definite shape in the vision by night, and Paul hears the voice, 'Come over into Macedonia and help us.' He accepted the invitation, and ere long touched European soil.

We notice here the introduction of the first person 'we.' The writer apparently becomes one of the band of travellers. He is said to have been Luke, who was by profession a physician, a native of Antioch in Syria, and one of Paul's earliest converts there. The narrative becomes fuller, and descriptions are more detailed. They touch at Samathrace, land at Neapolis, and proceed to Philippi, which was a Roman colony and a city of great importance. Not many Jews were there.

They had no synagogue, but only a *Proseuchae*—a place of prayer. This was outside the city by the side of the river. Here Lydia and her household were baptized. She was a seller of purple: she belonged to Thyatira, a city well known for its purple dye. She invited the missionaries to stay at her house, and the invitation was accepted.

Before long a storm arose. A woman, evidently of wandering mind, brought gain to her masters by fortune telling. For many days she followed Paul and his friends, causing them annoyance by her cries. An evil spirit was supposed to have taken possession of her. A belief in possession by evil spirits was generally held at that time, and Paul shared it in common with others. At length he was constrained to speak to the spirit, and his words appear to have brought the unfortunate woman to a more balanced frame of mind. The hysteria was gone, and with it all hope of future gain for her masters. They were enraged, and dragged Paul and Silas before the magistrates. They commanded them to be beaten. Having received many stripes, they were next cast into prison and their feet placed in the stocks. There at midnight, in the dark and dismal cell, the two apostles prayed and sang psalms of thanksgiving to God, and lo there happened one of those great convulsions in nature—an earthquake—which all regarded as a divine interposition. The place was shaken to the very foundations, and

everything was in a state of chaos. The jailor, fearful for the prisoners, and his own honour and safety as well, was on the point of taking his own life, but Paul prevented him. It may have been merely a question as to his personal safety which prompted the terrified question he put to Paul, but if so the Apostle turned it to a higher purpose. The jailor professed conversion, and showed his sincerity by washing the unjust stripes, and afterwards he took the two heroes to his own quarters and gave them food.

The following morning the magistrates, it might be from a feeling of superstitious dread, ordered the prisoners to be released. But Paul, as a Roman citizen who had been unjustly beaten and imprisoned, demanded some apology from the justices. They must themselves 'come and fetch us.' This they readily did, being afraid of the consequences of their illegal deeds. After calling upon Lydia, and seeing brethren to whom they bade an affectionate farewell, our friends left for Thessalonica. But a church was founded at Philippi, from which in later years Paul received many proofs of grateful affection.

LESSONS AND SUBJECTS FOR CONVERSATION.—The limits of compromise. The priestly versus the prophetic side of Christianity. The Apostles were but men, like the rest of us. We need to guard against all passion, temper, and illiberality. The law must be obeyed, and justices must administer justice.

LESSON VI.

PAUL AT THESSALONICA AND AT ATHENS.

Read *Acts* xvii.

MEMORY VERSE.—‘In him we live and move and have our being; as certain even of your own poets have said, “For we are also his offspring.”’

Philippi and Thessalonica were connected by a good road, the distance being about one hundred miles, which would be covered in three days or so. The company passed through Amphipolis and Appollonia. Thessalonica was one of the largest and most important cities of Macedonia. There resided the pro-consul. It is now called Salonika. Much the same happened as at other places visited. Paul goes to the synagogue of the Jews and preaches the Messiahship of Jesus. The feelings of an ignorant mob are excited against the preacher and his friends, and the house of Jason, where they lodged, was attacked. Paul and Barnabas were not within, so Jason was seized and brought before the rulers of the city, charged with having lodged men who were disturbing everything and preaching sedition. Jason was set at liberty, probably having given an assurance that he would try his best to get the Apostles away. Paul and Barnabas were sent away by night in the direction of Berea. Berea was fifty miles distant. The preachers were able to do a good work there until enemies appeared on the scene from Thessalonica. Nothing could now be done, and Paul's friends, anxious for

his safety, sent him away towards the sea in the charge of trusty men, who eventually brought Paul safely to Athens. It is probable that they set sail from some point near to Berea, and so reached Athens by sea. The distance between the two places was two hundred and fifty miles.

At Athens, Paul was to come face to face with the learning and wisdom of the age. Athens was called ‘the eye of Greece,’ the inventor of letters, the light of the civilised world. Here great philosophers and poets and sculptors had lived, here great deeds had been wrought. Athens was the stronghold of Paganism—the streets were full of statues of gods and goddesses; and one writer says that it had more statues than all the rest of Greece. It was also called ‘the altar of Greece,’ and a Roman satirist said it was so full of deities that it was easier to find a god than a man. Paul was by no means unfamiliar with Paganism, since he was a native of Tarsus, but at Athens he would see it in its fulness. He would doubtless contrast Athens with Jerusalem. If so, the change would be marked. Jerusalem, with the Temple and an utter absence of idols—Jerusalem with its monotheism, its belief in one God; and Athens with its Polytheism, its belief in many deities.

Paul was left alone in Athens. He perhaps thought he would like to be quiet, and see the sights of the famous city. But quietness was impossible to one of his ardent disposition, and par-

ticularly in Athens, where idolatry was rampant. He must needs speak of the One God, the Great Supreme, the only True, whose spirit lived within him. He utters his thoughts first in the Jewish synagogue, and then publicly in the open air in the Agora, or market place, where he found plenty of people ready to talk and argue with him. The Agora was the great place of discussion of all sorts of subjects. To the south of the Agora was a sloping hill, and on the north the craggy eminence of the Areopagus, or hill of Mars. There was the court, which had been in existence for generations, where sentence was passed on wrongdoers, where important disputes and questions were discussed and settled. The judges sat in the open air on seats hewn out in the solid rock. Paul, whom some regarded as an idle babbler, and others as a believer in gods hitherto unknown, was brought before the court on Mars Hill, and there he delivered his celebrated speech. He compliments the Athenians on their excessive zeal for religion, for as he had gone through the streets, in addition to statues and altars, dedicated to well known deities, he had actually seen one set apart 'to an unknown God.' He, whom they ignorantly worshipped, was God—the all-powerful, all-present, 'who dwelleth not in temples made with hands.' God, the source of life, the inspirer of every living thing, who had made man in his own image. We notice at once a change in the way in which Paul explains his religious

position. It would have been useless to quote Jewish scriptures to Athenians in proof of the Messiahship of Jesus. He cites a passage from one of their own poets in support of his belief in the indwelling God. He appeals to the religion of nature, and to the moral consciousness of man, as teaching providence and goodness, justice and righteousness. He teaches a universal Fatherhood and a universal brotherhood, revelation of a twofold kind, in the world of nature and in the human heart. Moreover repentance was necessary, since all had gone astray, and a day of judgment was appointed when judgment would be given by the man whom God had ordained, having rescued him from the darkness and nothingness of the grave.

Paul's thoughts were coloured by the ideas of his time. He, of necessity, saw things from the human point of view, and was liable to fall into mistakes, as, *e.g.*, in his belief that Jesus would come again on earth, as the Messiah of God, to judge the world. But making allowance for all limitation, there is much in Paul's teaching which commands our attention if we would lay hold upon the essentials of Christianity.

The result of Paul's preaching at Athens seems to have been small indeed. Some made fun of him and others put him off lightly, promising to give him a further hearing, but never troubling about the matter again. Only a very few clave unto him, and Paul left Athens smarting

under a bitter sense of having failed in that, the most enlightened of cities.

LESSONS AND SUBJECTS FOR CONVERSATION.—Did the Jews of Thessalonica willfully misrepresent Paul's teaching? In stating an opponent's position be just and truthful, and shrink from giving a caricature.

Distinguish between zeal for religious observances and religion itself. Compare Paul's speech with Stephen's, and read the words spoken at the well of Samaria, and look up *Isaiah* lxvi. 1-2. God everywhere—sees everything—knows us completely. He can be worshipped anywhere and at any time. Our best offering—an obedient life. Let our school and church prepare us for life.

LESSON VII.

PAUL AT CORINTH BEFORE GALLIO.

Read *Acts* xviii.

MEMORY VERSE.—'Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee.'

Paul left Athens for Corinth, the capital of Achaia, in Southern Greece. The city was a new one—the ancient city having long been destroyed. Julius Cæsar rebuilt it and made it a Roman colony. It was situated on an isthmus. Through it passed the commerce between the eastern and western world. Hence its great importance. It was called the gate of Greece. Hither flocked Jewish traders, and Greeks attracted largely by the Isthmian

games, which were very popular. The population was large and fluctuating, remarkable chiefly for its riches and its vices. The new religion would have to fight against many adverse influences amidst such a crowd of Greeks and Romans, Jews and men of every nation of the civilized world, ex-soldiers, philosophers, merchants, sailors, and of agents of every form of vice.

Many of the Jews residing there had been expelled from Rome by the decree of Claudius, A.D. 52. Amongst them were Aquila, a native of Pontus, in Asia Minor, and Priscilla, his wife. Apparently they were already Christians, though of that we are not sure. Being of the same trade as Paul they found him employment, and with them he lodged. He visited the synagogue each Sabbath, trying to persuade the people to accept his message. During this time he was waiting for Silas and Timothy, who had not yet arrived from Macedonia. At length they reached Corinth, and brought with them encouraging news about the progress of the cause at Thessalonica. Whereupon Paul was so pleased that he was moved to write a letter to his friends there, *1 Thess.* iii. 6. This letter is our first epistle to the Thessalonians, written about 53-54. Several months later he felt it necessary to write a second letter and that is our second epistle to the Thessalonians. Both are largely the outcome of the circumstances, the beliefs of the time. If you read them you will see that the

second coming of Messiah is spoken about a good deal. Timothy had said that there were some who were abandoning their ordinary callings because of their belief in the Lord's speedy return in glory. There were others who were troubled about the fate of those of their friends who should have fallen asleep before the second advent took place. Then there were others whose acceptance of Christianity was only nominal, who still lived on the low level of Paganism. See *1 Thess.* ii. 9, iv. 13-18, iv. 3-8.

In his second letter Paul, although holding strongly to the belief in the second coming, says pretty decidedly that it will not happen immediately, that there must first of all be the manifestation of Antichrist, *2 Thess.* ii. 2-4. He writes words of warning against irregular living and laziness, iii. 6-11.

These two letters are the oldest *written* portions of the New Testament.

After Silas and Timothy had come to Corinth, Paul began to preach with greater fervour amongst the Jews 'that Jesus was the Christ.' When they laughed at him and grew angry, Paul turned to the Gentiles. He converted Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, and very many of the inhabitants of the city. At length the Jews became so enraged that they dragged Paul before Gallio, who was pro-consul of Achaia, and accused him of trying to persuade men to worship contrary to the law. But Gallio was not to be led into acts of unfairness and indiscretion.

He dismissed the case, seeing that no wrong had been done. It was only a theological quarrel, a question as to words and names, and Gallio 'cared for none of these things.' Gallio was the brother of the philosopher, Seneca, 'who speaks of him with affection and esteem.' The people were angry because of the action of the Jews, and they seized Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him.

After some time had passed, Paul set out to visit Jerusalem again. He had the company of Aquila and Priscilla as far as Ephesus. He remained a short time at Ephesus, then left for Cæsarea, paid a short visit to the church at Jerusalem, and afterwards went to Antioch.

At Ephesus, Aquila and Priscilla met Apollos, an Alexandrian Jew, well-versed in the Scriptures, and a follower of John the Baptist. Him they converted to the larger faith, and he went to Corinth with recommendations from the brethren at Ephesus, and there did most successful work.

LESSONS AND SUBJECTS FOR CONVERSION.—Religion and the commercial spirit—honesty and duty, versus gain and unfaithfulness.

Religion and morals. The power of habits of life early acquired. Hard to shake them off, but Christianity gave and gives new life and power to men.

Religion and the State. Equality and freedom for all—no state persecution or unfair patronage.

LESSON VIII.

PAUL AT EPHESUS. THIRD MISSIONARY
JOURNEY. ABOUT 54-58.

Read *Acts* xix.

MEMORY VERSE.—‘And when they heard this they were filled with wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.’

After spending some short time at Antioch, Paul resolved to go a third time on a mission of preaching, and we read he travelled through ‘the region of Galatia and Phrygia.’ He went to Ephesus in fulfilment of his promise. Ephesus, in the time of Paul, was the largest and most celebrated city of Asia Minor, as well as the capital of the Roman province of Asia. ‘Its haven, which had been partly silted up by a mistake in engineering, was still thronged with vessels from every part of the civilized world’ (Farrar). It was a wealthy and a famous city, but famous in no exalted sense. It was the favourite home of superstition. Farrar says: ‘The Ephesians crawled at the feet of the emperors, flattered them with abject servility, built temples to their crime or their feebleness, deified them on their inscriptions and coins. . . . It was more Hellenic than Antioch, more oriental than Corinth, more populous than Athens, more wealthy and more refined than Thessalonica, more sceptical and more superstitious than Ancyra or Pessinus, cities of Galatia.’ Here was the temple of Diana, built of white marble, and from

its position at the head of the harbour it could be seen by sailors a long way out at sea. It was regarded as one of the wonders of the world, and all the cities of Asia Minor had contributed to the building of it. See description by Conybere and Howson, or Farrar. Evidently a great work was awaiting Paul at Ephesus; here great trials were in store for him; here he laboured and lived almost three years. He began by baptizing a number of John’s disciples to whom he communicated some of that spiritual force which had been given him—that heavenly fire which God had kindled in his heart. Christianity brought with it an influx of life, hitherto known and felt but by few men, and a closer contact with the spirit of God. That is no pious platitude, it is a matter of history.

Paul spoke boldly his message in the synagogue for some three months, after which he established his place of meeting in the school of Tyrannus, where he remained about two years. He appears to have been singularly successful. He made many converts both amongst Jews and Greeks. He exerted the power of healing diseases of certain kinds, which according to *Acts* he possessed, with wonderful effect. People forsook their superstitious beliefs—to such an extent that books relating to the practice of magic, to the value of 50,000 pieces of silver, were publicly burnt. These were not books of instruction, but strings of incantations supposed to be useful in curing diseases and procuring good fortune.

Paul now signified his intention of paying another visit to Jerusalem, but before going he sent Timothy and Erastus into Macedonia to collect money which he would take to the brethren at Jerusalem. It was the season of spring, when was held at Ephesus 'the great fair—the Ephesia—which attracted an immense concourse of people from all parts of Asia, and was kept with all possible splendour and revelry.' The games usually extended over the whole month of May, and the attendance was so large that vast numbers were unable to lodge in the town, and they had to sleep in goat-hair tents pitched on the plain outside the city walls. The visitors generally bought before leaving some little memento of their visit to Ephesus, —'little silver shrines and images,' models of the temple of Diana, etc. No doubt they were regarded as charms or fetishes. As there was a large demand for them we may well believe that the trade was a very profitable one. But Christianity, through the preaching of Paul, was working a change in this respect also. People were less eager to purchase than formerly, and though many would be disposed of, Demetrius, the silversmith, whose workmen made the images, knew well enough that his interest was threatened. His business was falling off. He called his men together and told them their employment was in danger of extinction, and all through Paul's preaching, which was also likely to render the temple of

Diana of no account. He succeeded in creating a riot; the mob, intent on mischief, rushed to the theatre, taking with them Gaius and Aristarchus, two of Paul's friends. Paul would have gone to the theatre but he was persuaded not to show himself in public. The assembly was in great confusion, 'some crying one thing, and some another.' The town clerk eventually restored order, and by a tactful speech, in which he showed that the uproar was 'undignified, was unjustifiable, was unnecessary,' and also illegal, a great danger was averted. The meeting dispersed quietly, but it is easy to see that Paul's safety and that of his colleagues had been trembling in the balance. Shortly afterwards Paul bade his friends farewell, and set out for Macedonia.

NOTES.—Paul wrote his first letter to the Corinthians while he was at Ephesus, and not long before he left. He had heard with pain of the rise of parties in the church at Corinth, of unseemly disputes therein. There were irregularities in the celebration of the Lord's Supper and in the conducting of public worship. There were also irregularities of a darker and more serious kind involving a breach of well-defined moral and spiritual laws.

Paul's letter to the Galatians was probably written 'from Ephesus; perhaps after he left.' See Dr. Drummond's *Galatians*—the chronological table of Paul's life on page 39.

Judaizers had been in Galatia telling Paul's converts that they must submit

to Jewish customs—must be circumcised; also casting doubts upon Paul's right to be considered an apostle. Paul vindicated his apostleship which he received not from men, neither through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, to whom alone he was responsible. They were the source of his authority. He exhorted his readers not to be again entangled in bondage to the law but to stand fast in the freedom with which Christ did 'set us free.' For fuller analysis see Dr. Drummond's *Galatians*, page 38.

LESSONS AND SUBJECTS FOR CONVERSATION.—The Holy Spirit—the influence from God. What Christianity did and can do.

The corruptions of Christianity—Roman Catholics and the use of images—adoration of supposed sacred relics. Has the cross never been abused by the treatment it has received? The sacred symbol of the cross—self-sacrifice.

We realise Paul's heroic qualities all the more fully when we see him at Ephesus beset by great difficulties and trials in his work of preaching, and also having the care of the churches upon him. What patience and endurance he must have had, as well as faith and enthusiasm!

LESSON IX.

CONCLUSION OF THE THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY—PAUL GOES UP TO JERUSALEM.

Read *Acts* xx., xxi. and xxii.

MEMORY VERSE.—'And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down and

prayed with them all. And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the word which he had spoken, that they should behold his face no more.'

Paul, not deeming it prudent to stay longer in Ephesus, set out for Macedonia. He wished to remain till Titus returned from Corinth. Titus did not come, and so Paul left for Troas. Again he waited for news from Corinth, but Titus was still absent. Paul then crossed into Macedonia, and went to Philippi, where he had many faithful friends. There he found Timothy. After a time Titus arrived with the information for which Paul was eagerly waiting. It has been thought by some that Titus had been the bearer of a letter, from Paul to Corinth, which is no longer extant. Be this as it may, it is certain that on the appearance of Titus, and as a result of the news he brought, Paul was moved to send another letter, which we have now in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians. From a slight reading of that letter it is easy to see that at Corinth, as elsewhere, Judaizers had been casting doubts on Paul's character, trying to influence people against him. Paul feels that he must put himself on his defence, and anyone who might have been inclined to doubt his right to be called an Apostle, would surely have all misgivings removed after reading, or hearing read, what Paul wrote in *2 Cor.* chapter xi., verses 16 to 33. Read that splendid outburst yourself

and you will see what a brave, noble, heroic soul Paul had.

Paul spent some time in Macedonia, but how long we cannot say. He then made his way into southern Greece and came to Corinth, where he remained three months. While here he wrote another letter, and this time to Rome. The letter is the Epistle to the Romans, which we possess. Paul says he has often longed to visit Rome, but hitherto he has not been able to do so. He hopes at some time to see his friends there, and to preach to them in Rome, since he is not ashamed of the Gospel. But he must first go to Jerusalem to take the proceeds of the collection which had been made in Macedonia. The church at Rome was composed of converts from Judaism, and Gentile converts. The order by which Jews had been expelled from Rome on account of creating riots had been cancelled, and so, many Jews returned to Rome, and amongst others were Aquila and Priscilla, Paul's friends. While scattered abroad, many Jews had become converted to Christianity, and when they got back to Rome they professed the new faith. Paul felt that they and the rest would need advice and encouragement.

Paul and his friends intended to sail direct from Corinth to Syria, but the Jews conspired together to waylay and perhaps kill him. Hearing of this, Paul determined to return through Macedonia. The party reached Philippi and then crossed to Troas, where 'we tarried seven days.' Paul preached to

the people on the Sunday evening, at the close of the communion service—the breaking of bread. He was to leave on the morrow, and much he wished to say in the short time at his disposal. He spoke far on into the night. The room was hot, and sleep came upon a young man named Eutychus, who was sitting near an open window. He fell through the window some distance to the ground, and was taken up as people thought dead. But he was only stunned, and Paul was able to assure the young man's friends that he was still alive, and presently to their joy he revived. The next morning Paul walked to Assos, a distance of twenty miles, where he took ship and came to Mitylene, and soon to Miletus, from which place he sent a note of kindly exhortation to his friends at Ephesus, which furnishes us with one more proof of the fact that Paul was always thinking about others and how he might help them.

At Miletus Paul took a sad farewell of the brethren there. What a touching sight it must have been to see that little group by the sea shore, and the kneeling figure of the unwearied preacher commending one and all to the keeping of the good God! We can well believe that the people lingered long upon the spot to be henceforth held as sacred in their memory, and watched till the ship which bore Paul away was out of sight. The ship sailed to Coos, Rhodes, and Patara in Lycia. There a vessel was found which was about to cross to Phœnicia. In that

the company embarked, passed Cyprus on the left, and landed at Tyre in Lycia, next proceeding to Ptolemais, and landing finally at Cæsarea, where lived Philip the Evangelist, with whom the travellers abode. While staying there, Agabus arrived from Jerusalem. He heard of Paul's intention to visit Jerusalem, and he said that if Paul went he would be almost certain to suffer persecution and imprisonment. This he knew from what he had heard, and from the signs of the times. But in spite of all Agabus could say, Paul's resolution was not to be shaken. He felt it was his duty to go; and as for threats he was not afraid, for 'he was ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus.' He did not court martyrdom, but he did not shrink from it. Away with all feelings of a fearful nature. He had not been afraid at Philippi, at Lystra, at Corinth, and at Ephesus, and he was not afraid now. To Jerusalem he would go, whatever happened. Duty called. He had the collection with him which would show the goodwill of others, and of himself also, towards the church there. False reports had been spread far and wide about him. These he must correct, and so maintain his self-respect, and above all the peace and unity of the church must be preserved.

Paul reached Jerusalem in May, near the Feast of Pentecost. The brethren received him gladly, though some think that the leaders of the church treated him in a cool manner.

The day following his arrival, James, in the presence of the elders, told Paul of the reports that they had heard concerning him, that he wished to destroy Jewish customs, and to bring the laws of Moses into disrepute. To mollify the feelings of the Jews and remove to some extent their suspicions, Paul was asked to visit the Temple, and so show in public his conformity to some of the ancient ceremonial rites of the Church. According to *Acts* Paul consented to this great compromise, and entered the Temple with four others, who were under a vow, to go through the ceremony of purification. He may have done this; but if he did so act he put all personal inclinations and convictions away from him, sacrificing himself for the good of others.

The temple was full of Jews from all parts, some of whom would be certain to know Paul, having seen and heard him elsewhere. Before the seven days of purification were completed he was recognised by some Jews from Asia. Their hatred of him flamed up, and they raised a tumult. They said that Paul wished to bring Greeks into the temple, and so profane the Holy Place.

Paul was dragged from the Holy Place to the outer court of the temple. Here the multitude fell upon him, evidently intending to kill him. But the Roman soldiers were on the alert. They saw it was no ordinary riot. A message was sent to the governor, Claudius Lysias, who lived in the castle of Antonia, which was on the north-west side of the temple. He was soon

on the spot with a strong body of soldiers, and when the people saw them they left off beating Paul, who was taken in charge, chained by each hand to a soldier. Lysias questioned the crowd, but all was confusion, and he could get no intelligible reply; and so he ordered the soldiers to take Paul into the castle.

An Egyptian impostor a little before had misled a large number of people by saying that *he* was the Jewish Messiah. Through him many people were slain by the Roman soldiers, but he escaped, and at the time to which our story refers he had not been apprehended, though a reward was offered and search was being made. Lysias thought that Paul was the man. Paul, wishful to address the people, spoke to Lysias as he was about to be taken into the castle. Lysias was surprised when he heard himself addressed in Greek. This man he had was no Egyptian after all, but a Jew of Tarsus. Lysias was all curiosity, and he allowed Paul to speak to the multitude. Paul stood upon the stairs, and beckoning with the hand which had been loosed from the chain, spoke to the people in their own Aramaic language. They listened silently while he detailed the experiences of his eventful life, till he mentioned his preaching to the Gentiles, and then the storm burst afresh, and the cry went forth—'Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.' Lysias, not having understood the language in which Paul spoke, thought Paul had

committed some crime, and so ordered him to be examined by torture, till he should confess his offence. This was avoided by Paul's pleading the rights of a Roman citizen, but Lysias still kept him in charge.

LESSONS AND SUBJECTS FOR CONVERSATION.—Paul's endurance—what do we endure? Paul's sympathy—have we sympathy? Paul's tenderness—are we tender? Paul's purpose not to be shaken. 'He would go to Jerusalem.' Compare Luther's journey to Worms, and the last visit to Jerusalem, when Jesus steadfastly set his face towards the city. Is our face set to look the right way? Is our heart responsive to duty and to truth? Would you put those first and foremost, before pleasure, and happiness, and friendship?

LESSON X.

PAUL BEFORE ANANIAS AND FELIX.

Read *Acts* xxiii. and xxiv.

MEMORY VERSE.—'But this I confess unto thee, that after the Way they call heresy, so serve I the God of our fathers.'

The day following, Lysias, having called a meeting of the Sanhedrin and chief priests, brought Paul before them. This had been the scene of Stephen's trial many years before. Here Paul, though under the protection of the soldiers, was not free from stinging insults. He had barely begun to speak to the assembly when the high priest, Ananias, ordered him to

be hit on the mouth. Paul was justly indignant at such shameful treatment, and the retort came, 'God shall smite thee, thou whited wall; and sittest thou to judge me according to the law, and commandest me to be smited contrary to the law?' If ever a rebuke was richly deserved that rebuke was. It may be that Paul's subsequent words in response to the question, 'Revilest thou God's high priest?' were spoken in irony or by way of apology. But, perhaps, he did not know he was speaking to the high priest, who, however, merited all he got.

Paul acted in a human, though not in a very praiseworthy manner, when at this point he stirred up bitter feelings amongst the Jews themselves. He knew what would be sure to set Sadducees against Pharisees, both of whom were present, and so he began to speak of the resurrection, saying that he was a Pharisee. The council got confused, some agreeing with Paul, and others not, and evidently many lost their tempers in the violence of their arguings, and Lysias, being afraid 'lest Paul should be torn in pieces by them,' had him removed into the castle.

The following morning more than forty men bound themselves under a vow neither to eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. They were to ask for another trial, and as he was on his way to the court they would murder him. Paul's nephew heard of the plot, and as soon as possible told his uncle of it. Paul asked that his nephew might be

taken to Lysias, and the request was granted. When Lysias heard the story he at once took proper measures to ensure Paul's safety. That same night, under a powerful guard, Paul was taken to Cæsarea, and Lysias sent a letter of explanation to Felix, the Roman governor, who commanded Paul to be kept a prisoner in Herod's palace till his accusers arrived. Felix was a man of base origin, and did not bear a good character. He had done many cruel and unjust deeds. In his favour we can say that he had done something towards clearing the country of robbers.

Ananias and his party soon arrived at Cæsarea, and with them a Roman lawyer, named Tertullus. Paul was charged with being a preacher of sedition, which was absolutely without proof; with being a leader of the Nazarenes, and so guilty of heresy—a charge with which Roman law had nothing whatever to do; with having profaned the temple, which was an offence against both Jewish and Roman law, since 'the emperor was bound to protect the Jews in the exercise of their worship.' Paul replied that it was but twelve days since he went to Jerusalem, that he had acted in a quiet and orderly way there, that he went to Jerusalem with alms for his countrymen, that he was in the temple for a lawful purpose, and that his belief in the resurrection was the cause of his being brought before the Sanhedrin. Felix deferred his judgment till Lysias should have arrived, and he ordered

Paul to be treated kindly, and that his friends should be allowed free access to him. Some little time after, Paul was asked to explain his religion to Felix and Drusilla, his wife, and this in answer to a request from Felix himself. Doubtless both were touched in their consciences by what they heard, and Felix sent Paul away, saying he would hear him again at a more convenient season; but that convenient season never came in the higher and better sense. The old sinful life went on just the same, and Felix kept Paul in custody month after month hoping to receive a bribe in order to release him. But no money was forthcoming, and Felix detained Paul, knowing full well that he was unjustly accused. At length, at the end of two years he was summoned to Rome to answer charges of injustice made against himself; and to gain favour with the Jews and prove his own baseness as well, he left Paul bound.

LESSONS AND SUBJECTS FOR CONVERSATION.—Types of character: Ananias, the blind partizan, who would not scruple to abuse his power and position; Felix, the man whose greed for money had overcome all sense of honour and justice.

The conspiracy against Paul which was sanctioned and approved by the priests—how many crimes have been committed in the name of religion?

Paul probably knew that money might have procured his release; but liberty, precious as it was, was too dear if obtained by any dishonourable means.

LESSON XI.

PAUL BEFORE FESTUS AND AGRIPPA.

Read *Acts* xxv. and xxvi.

MEMORY VERSE.—‘I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision.’

Paul’s enemies thought a new governor would be more favourable to their plans—but this was not so. Festus, who succeeded Felix, was a man of different stamp. Paul’s accusers wished the case to be tried at Jerusalem, but to that Festus would not consent. The truth was, the Jews had again plotted to take Paul’s life by the way. At Cæsarea Paul championed his cause in no half-hearted manner, showing the utter hollowness of the charges against him, and Festus was evidently of opinion that there was no case against him. He, however, threw out the suggestion in the form of a question, Would Paul like to be judged at Jerusalem? and his surprise would be great when Paul, in response, took the case entirely out of his hands by his appeal to Cæsar. Paul was tired of waiting month after month at Cæsarea; he would get no justice at Jerusalem: he was a Roman citizen and was within his right in appealing to Cæsar. Moreover, he wanted to go to Rome, and he preferred to go as a prisoner rather than not at all. The journey thither was now only a matter of time. Meanwhile, King Agrippa and Bernice arrived at Cæsarea to congratulate Festus on his appointment, and Festus mentioned Paul’s case to them, saying

Paul had appealed to Cæsar, and that he was somewhat perplexed what charges to lay against him. They expressed a desire to see and hear Paul, and the following day, attended by every sign of pomp and splendour, they took their place in the court 'with the captains and chief men of the city,' and presently Paul was brought in. Festus said plainly he had nothing with which to charge Paul. At the bidding of Agrippa, Paul spoke for himself. Again, as at Jerusalem, he drew from his life-experience. His themes were the conversion of himself, the resurrection, and his mission to the Gentiles. As he spoke with fervour on these things Festus thought that Paul was mad and said so. Doubtless, they would appear to him as strange. Paul assured him he was in his right mind, and then he turned to the king, who was at least nominally a Jew, saying that he would understand better the significance of his words. The king was impressed in Paul's favour and said, 'he might have been set at liberty if he had not appealed to Cæsar.'

LESSONS AND SUBJECTS FOR CONVERSATION.—Types of character: Festus true to a Roman's idea of justice; Agrippa, the light-hearted man of the world, devoid of any depth of character, with no real religious convictions.

Agrippa was but the creature of a day, his guilt and trappings were soon things of the past; but Paul, the prisoner, became a world-hero, and his words and work are to last till the end

of time. Man proposes, but God disposes, and what a destiny was in store for Paul because he was true to the right and the good!

LESSON XII.

THE VOYAGE TO ROME. SHIPWRECK. LIFE IN ROME.

Read *Acts* xxvii. and xxviii.

MEMORY VERSE.—'And from thence the brethren, when they heard of us, came to meet us: . . . whom when Paul saw, he thanked God and took courage.'

A very graphic and beautiful account is given of the journey to Rome. It is probably the work of Luke. Paul and certain other prisoners were placed under the charge of Julius. They embarked in a ship bound for Asia Minor, and called at Sidon, sixty-seven miles distant, where, through the kindness of the centurion, Paul was allowed to visit his friends; then north of Cyprus, along the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia to Myra in Lycia. Here the party went on board a ship of Alexandria, which was sailing for Italy. Egypt was the place from which Italy and particularly Rome was supplied with corn. The ship was carrying grain. Having encountered contrary winds it was some time before Crete was reached. Being now late in the year, perhaps October, Paul advised a postponement of the voyage. His advice was not accepted, it being thought desirable to reach Phenece on the south-west coast, where was a

better harbour. This plan did not succeed. A terrific storm struck them and they were driven forward in a helpless condition, the ship being quite beyond their control, and moreover, it was leaking badly. Then followed a dreary interval of many days, during which Paul never lost hope, nor did his resources fail him. More than once he was able to render great service. Eventually the ship was wrecked on the coast of Malta, but all on board, two hundred and seventy-six in number, were saved. The inhabitants were very kind. They tarried in Malta three months, and in the spring sailed in 'The Twin Brothers,' a vessel of Alexandria, touched at Syracuse, where they remained three days, and then on to Rhegium and to Puteoli in the northern part of the Bay of Naples. There Paul met some friends and stayed with them seven days, and brethren from Rome came to meet him, some as far as Appii Forum and others to the Three Taverns, and thus Paul reached Rome.

The treatment Paul received at Rome was not severe. The centurion would speak well of him. He was allowed to live in his own hired house, but night and day he was chained to the arm of a Roman soldier, which for many reasons would not be a pleasant experience. He was waiting for his trial to take place, and his accusers were slow to put in an appearance. Without their personal attendance there could be no trial; and so two years passed away, 61 to 63 A.D., but

Paul was by no means idle. His friends were allowed to see him, and he was permitted to preach, and during this time it is highly probable that he wrote letters to friends in distant places, some of which are lost and some of which we happily possess. These are the Epistles to the Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, and Philippians.

Paul called the Jews together and explained why he was a prisoner. They said they had received no accusation from Judea, nor had they seen any accusers. But they wished to hear him and so learn something of the sect which was everywhere spoken against. Paul preached before them, explaining his religious position. The result was a division amongst them, and probably the apostle would soon find he was not without enemies in Rome. The Book of *Acts* terminates by leaving Paul in Rome still awaiting his trial. Tradition says that when the trial did take place before Nero, the case against Paul broke down. Festus had virtually declared his innocence, and he was set free. If so he would most likely visit again the churches in Greece and Asia Minor. Tradition says that he visited Spain; returned to the East, was arrested at Nicopolis, and sent as a prisoner to Rome at a time when the Christians were suffering terrible persecutions under Nero. Bleek says we may regard it as a 'settled and established fact that St. Paul died as a martyr at Rome under Nero,' 64 to 67 A.D. The second Epistle to Timothy may refer to this time either during

trial or after sentence of death been passed upon him. He had 'fought the good fight' and 'finished the course.' *2 Tim.* iv. 6, 7. He is said to have been beheaded at a spot a little outside the city.

LESSONS.—Paul's utter fidelity to his cause. He never gave way to despair. He was full of confidence to the last.

The world's debt to Paul as a man and a leader of men, as a teacher and preacher, as a thinker and a practical worker, as a missionary and a theologian, as a reformer of men and of society, and as a lover of his brothers. And yet his was—so he himself would have said—all borrowed light. He was the preacher of Christ's gospel—Paul the servant of Christ. To that Master whom he loved better than he loved himself he was ever true, and having witnessed in life a good confession, in death he was not confounded.

R. C. MOORE.

'I was once standing by a great river which was rushing to the sea, and I watched a strong man, in a small boat, labouring to push it up the stream: he had little more power than a baby. And I watched a young boy in another boat, playing with the water, so it seemed: but the current of the stream was with him, and his light strokes bore him on swiftly as the wings of a bird. I thought then that the will of God is as the force of that rushing river; to sail with it is strength,—to strive against it, weakness.'

E. M. SEWELL.



The Editor's Bookshelf.



FAVOURITE set of lessons with many of our classes is that made from the lives of great and good men and women. When a teacher will take up the biography of some brave and noble life; and will not merely read through a book on the subject, or let the class read one round, but will get an 'inside view' first of all for himself, there is scarcely a more popular, or profitable subject, that can be dealt with in our Sunday schools.

For an elder class one of the best books of its kind is, in my opinion, Mark Twain's *Story of Joan of Arc* (price 6/-). As Sunday school teachers have so constantly to refer to times when supernatural stories surrounded, as with a halo, the lives of all true heroes, it is of great value to show our lads and lassies that such ideas are not confined to Biblical history, but are common to histories of a far later date also. The simple, steadfast character of the pure Maid

of Orleans must awaken an enthusiasm in the hearts of all who read her life, and the story, with its adventure and romance, will be certainly appreciated. The whole book will probably be too long for reading through; the best way would be for the teacher to read it to himself first, and then tell some of the parts, and read the rest, to his class.

Dorothea Dix, by Frances E. Cooke (1s. net), is very well adapted for class teaching, either for senior boys or girls. It is good for us all to see what one quiet woman can accomplish if she has a strong enough belief in her work, and what mountains of obstacles may be overcome. Dorothea Dix found that the lot of the insane in the United States was most terrible; and, thanks mainly to her unrelenting efforts, a wonderful change for the better has taken place there. The whole story of her life is full of interest and human sympathy. To Miss Cooke we are also indebted for many other interesting biographies; some—short ones—bound up in two volumes, called *Noble Workers* (1s. net), and *Stories of Great Lives* (1s.), and others:—*Theophilus Lindsey and his Friends*, *Theodore Parker*, *Savonarola*, and others (each 1s. or 1s 6d.), in which the one life fills the volume.

Teachers desiring to give their scholars, or to take in for themselves, some idea of the development of religious thought in our own country, are recommended to read the Rev. Brooke Herford's *Story of Religion in England*

(price 2/6). The Rev. Clement Pike has also given us, in his *Story of Religion in Ireland* (1/- net), an interesting account of our sister isle, which may be said to form a companion volume to Dr. Herford's excellent work.

Some of our teachers like to draw their lessons from nature's teachings. Probably *The Gift of Life* (1s. 6d.), and *Dwellers in our Gardens* (2s. 6d.), by Sara Wood, are already familiar friends to these. Just lately I have come across a very helpful book for those who wish to introduce their children to the marvels of plant life, called *How Plants Live and Work*, (2s. 6d.), by Eleanor Hughes-Gibb, which treats the subject in an interesting, reverent, and simple fashion.

Our Sunday School Association has issued a very useful catalogue of books of good stories, etc., specially marked according to their suitability as to age of readers; and classified according to price. This may be had on application to Mr. Hare, Sunday School Association, Essex Hall, Essex Street, Strand, W.C., as also any of the books mentioned in these articles.

Just one word with reference to a little book revised and reprinted from the 'Sunday School Helper.' I allude to *Practical Hints for Sunday School Teachers*, by the Rev. H. Rawlings (6d. net). It is simply and clearly written, and deals, in turn, with the various difficulties with which teachers have to contend, in a sympathetic and most helpful manner.

'Pippa Passes.'

PART OF A SUNDAY SCHOOL ADDRESS
GIVEN AT CAPE TOWN.

'All service ranks the same with God.'
ROBERT BROWNING.



WISH to tell you this afternoon the story of a little girl called Pippa. It is told in a poem by a great English poet named Robert Browning. But sometimes Mr. Browning does not make his meaning very clear, so if I tell you the story as simply as I can, then, maybe, you will understand it better, and we can have a talk about it afterwards.

Pippa was a little factory girl in Asolo, a town in Italy. In the factories in Europe, the children sometimes work very long hours and have very few holidays. Pippa springs out of bed on New Year's morning, and remembers that that is her one holiday in all the year. 'What,' she asks herself, 'shall she be for that one day in the year?' 'She will not be a factory girl that day,' she says. She will not think at all about her factory life—it is so hard, so joyless, so wearisome. She will make it a real holiday. What, then, shall she be? She turns to her flowers in the window, and tends them, and laughs merrily at the thought that she will call herself their Queen. But that does not satisfy her very long, as you may easily imagine. So she begins to think of the people in the town where

she lives, just as you might think about the people in Cape Town. She turns them over in her mind, and wonders, and wonders, which of them she would like to be.

'For am I not this day' she says,
'Whate'er I please? what shall I please
to-day?

..... How spend my day?
To-morrow I must be Pippa who winds
silk

The whole year round, to earn just bread
and milk,

But this one day, I have leave to go,
And play out my fancy's fullest games;
I may fancy all day,—and it shall be so—
That I taste of the pleasures, am called by
the names

Of the happiest four in our Asolo.'

That is, she will imagine herself to be three or four of the happiest people in Asolo, just as you might imagine yourself to be three or four of the happiest people in Cape Town.

First, she thinks of the Lady Ottima, very rich, very beautiful, whose husband owns all the factory in which Pippa works. But she suddenly calls to mind some ugly stories she has heard about Ottima—that she is heartless, cruel, and wicked. So Pippa says to herself that she would rather be some one better than that, notwithstanding all the Lady Ottima's wealth and beauty. Then a new thought strikes her. She has often seen walking through the town a lady and her only son Luigi. She has noted how tenderly and gently they speak to and care for each other. Pippa was left an orphan when quite a little one, and has never known

father or mother, so you can easily imagine how strongly she would like to be Luigi, and so learn to know a mother's love and care. Surely you, too, would be like Pippa, if, like her, you were unfortunate enough to be without father or mother!

‘Lovers grow cold,’ she says,
‘Men learn to hate their wives,
And only parents’ love can last our lives.’

But then the thought of someone else enters her mind. She has heard speak of a good Bishop who has just come to Asolo to attend the funeral of his brother. He, she thinks, represents a higher and a wider love than all the others. Not the love of a lover or the love of a parent, but the love of all mankind, the love of God. You see she wants to be really good, and so she chooses what she thinks to be the highest form of goodness, and surely, she says, the Bishop, who should love everyone, must be that.

But suddenly the strains of a New Year's hymn she has learnt float into her mind:

‘All service ranks the same with God.’

What does that mean? It means that if we will only do our very best, using all the talents we have for the good of everyone, then, whether we are rich or poor, or strong or weak, or great or small, our service is the same in the sight of God, because, having done our best, we can do no more. ‘All service ranks the same

with God.’ If that line in the hymn be true, says little Pippa, then she may love and serve as well as any bishop. She, though only a little girl, may do what she can to make the world a little brighter and happier. So she will not think any more of the people she would like to be. She will just be herself. ‘I will pass each and see their happiness,’ she says, ‘and envy none.’ She will spend her holiday just as the little girl she is, in the country and in the town.

‘Let the sun shine,’ she says,
‘Wherefore repine,
With thee to lead me, O Day of mine’

So she leaves her little room, and goes into the sunshine in the streets, singing softly to herself for very happiness.

As she goes through the town she passes the house of that very Lady Ottima, about whom she was thinking that very morning. Now Ottima, as I said, is a very bad woman. She has conspired with a man named Sebald to do a deed of great wickedness, and they are now rejoicing together, saying what merry lives they will lead. But the man is not happy. He knows he has consented to do a great wrong, and his conscience will not let him rest. You know what that means, of course. He felt just as we feel when we have told an untruth—we feel so ashamed of ourselves that our conscience will not let us rest, and we vow that we will never be so mean again. Well, Sebald felt just like that, and at that very moment little

Pippa passes in the street below, singing to herself one of her songs :

'The year's at the spring, and day's at the morn,
Morning's at seven ; the hillside's dew-pearled,
The lark's on the wing, the snail's on the thorn ;
God's in His heaven—all's right with the world.'

The man hears the song, and it brings back old memories. 'Who is that singing in the street below?' he asks. 'It's only little Pippa, one of our factory girls,' Ottima replies. But Sebald cannot rest. He is conscience-stricken. He turns away from the woman, and tells her he will not help her in the deed they have planned together. He will no longer live a life of wickedness. The words of little Pippa's story have struck to his heart. 'God's in His heaven,' he says. He must do right at all costs. And so he resolves to live a better life, and try to atone for his past wickedness.

Meanwhile, little Pippa passes on unconsciously, knowing nothing of all this. Soon she comes to the house of Luigi and his mother. Now Luigi belongs to a band of courageous men who are trying to rid their country of the oppressive government of a very bad king. He has been selected by his comrades to go on a very perilous mission. But his mother tries to persuade him not to go. She tells him that he will be arrested and cast into prison, and that she may never

see him alive again. Luigi falters. He loves his mother very much, and he does not wish to leave her, but he thinks that a higher duty calls him away. Just then he hears the voice of Pippa as she sings gaily in the street beneath. This time her song is about a king who loves justice and executes judgment on evil-doers. The words strike fire in the heart of Luigi. He tries to cheer his mother, and goes away telling her that he must obey the voice of Duty, even before the voice of Love.

Again Pippa passes on her way. This time she passes the palace of the very Bishop about whom she has been thinking that morning. He is arranging the affairs of his brother, who has recently died. The Bishop himself thinks that he is the heir to all the money and property his brother has left behind him. He has with him a steward of his brother's estate, and this man explains to the Bishop that the brother who is now dead has an heiress to the estate—a girl—but he, the steward, had this girl kidnapped, that is, stolen away, from her father and mother in her infancy. She still lives, however, and he, the steward, knows where she lives. But he will cause her to be put to death, or tempted away and forgotten, if the Bishop will divide half the estate with him. Now, the girl who has been stolen away in childhood, and who is now to be put to death, is none other than little Pippa herself. At that instant, while this great crime is

being proposed, she passes the palace singing one of her songs about the innocence of childhood. The Bishop hears it. He does not know that Pippa is his niece. But her song goes to his heart—his good angel, his conscience, whispers to him, as it whispers to all of us when we do right, and he chooses the right side. He spurns the temptation from him, he will not think about it, and he orders the villainous steward to be cast into prison.

Pippa goes back to her home and spends the remainder of her holiday there. As she goes at night to her little room, she calls to mind the people about whom she was thinking in the morning—Ottima, Luigi, the Bishop, and she wonders whether she will ever come into real contact with them. Will she, the poor factory girl, ever so much as touch the garments of all these people she has been thinking about? She does not know how strangely and wonderfully she has influenced their lives for good. And the story just ends there. We are left to guess whether, next morning, the good Bishop will come and tell Pippa that she is now a rich lady. That, to the poet, is only a very small part of the business. The truth which he wishes us to bear in mind is this—that 'all service ranks the same with God;' that little children, so long as they try to do their best, so long as they keep their minds innocent, so long as they go about with a merry heart, carrying joy and

gladness with them—may be of even greater service than many older people. That, he says, is what you little folks must do. Never think of doing evil; always try to be helpful; always have confidence in the right and the good, then you will encourage others to have confidence too. You may make mistakes, but it is better to make a few mistakes and keep a warm heart, than grow cold, and selfish, and stingy, and ill-tempered.

RAMSDEN BALMFORTH.

'WHEN we learn to love a sweet and noble character, we all feel happier and better for the goodness and charity which is not ours, and yet which seems to belong to us while we are near it.

'Just as some people and states of mind affect us uncomfortably, so we seem to be true to ourselves with a truthful person, generous-minded with a generous nature—life seems less disappointing and self-seeking when we think of the just, and sweet, and unselfish spirits, moving untroubled among dinning and distracting influences.

'These are our friends in the best and noblest sense. We are the happier for their existence—it is so much gain to us. They may have lived at some distant time, we may never have met face to face, or we may have known them and been blessed with their love; but their light shines from afar, their life is for us and with us in its generous example, their song is for our ears and we hear it and love it still, though the singer be lying dead.'

MISS THACKERAY on *Jane Austen*.

Child Study.

IV. The Necessity for allowing Children an opportunity for Training their own Will.

“Do you know what is the use of children?”

“They are of no use but to destroy everything, and upset everybody.”

“They are useful for something else; through them we can begin our own life again, when it has been unsatisfactory; it enables us to make them succeed where we have failed.”

HECTOR MALOT.



WE have said that the best guide we possess, in our endeavour to understand and help our children, lies in the memory of our own infancy; and therefore it is always a valuable addition to our store of knowledge when any thoughtful men or women give us the benefit of their experience. John Ruskin, in his *Præterita*, after a somewhat detailed account of his own childhood, describes, as the good fruits of his upbringing (which, as only child of well-to-do parents, was a carefully shielded, though a lonely one), to have been peace, obedience, faith, and ‘perfection of palate’; while its defects he summed up as (1) having nothing or nobody to love; (2) nothing to en-

dure;— and (3) shyness, and want of etiquette of manner.

His next words are, I think, full of suggestion for all who have the training of children, so I will quote them here.

‘Lastly, and chief of evils, my judgment of right and wrong, and powers of independent action, were left entirely undeveloped; *because* THE BRIDLE AND THE BLINKERS WERE NEVER TAKEN OFF ME.

‘Children should have their times of being off duty, like soldiers; and when once the obedience, if required, is certain, the little creature should be very early put, for periods of practice, in complete command of itself; set on the bare-backed horse of its own will, and left to break it by its own strength. But the ceaseless authority exercised over my youth left me, when cast out at last into the world, unable for some time to do more than drift with its vortices.

‘My present verdict, therefore, on the general tenor of my education at that time must be, that it was at once

too formal and too luxurious; leaving my character, at the most important moment for its construction, cramped but not disciplined; and only by *protection innocent, instead of by practice virtuous.*'

Of how many of our young people may not this be said with equal truth? We see a family of children sometimes—happily not so frequently now as in the last generations—who have such an external surface of polished veneer, that their behaviour is perfect—so long, that is, as parent or nursemaid is near. But then the surprise, when some accident leaves them unprotected by authority, and the undisciplined nature shows itself in all its nakedness!

It will be well for us all to remember that a child is as yet undeveloped in character, as in stature; and that it is as absurd to expect it to be perfect in mental and moral growth as it would be to fret because its body has not attained its full size.

Let us read what Robert Collyer says about this, in his beautiful sermon on the *Overplus of Blossom*.

'It is a sad sight to me to see fathers and mothers who have no such wisdom for their children as these wise men,'—he is referring to the fruit growers—'have for the saplings, and cannot be content to let the child be a child, and nothing more, but must still burden the tender plant with demands which belong to the strong and able tree.'

'Fathers and mothers who are not content to keep the saplings clean

from the evil things that burrow around the roots, and to see that the soil is good from which they draw their strength and nurture, keep them straight and true, and then let the sun shine on them,—who cannot be content, I say, with all this, and the blossoming into the bargain, but must be still urging them on to fruitful action, while as yet the choicest gift of God to them is this simple aspiration.'

There is, however, the opposite mistake against which we must also guard ourselves, namely, that of thinking that the moral nature only begins to exist after childhood is almost past. This is an even worse error than the other; for if we do not *expect* a thing, we are not likely to get it. I believe the germ of the higher nature is in our babies even; their growth is a gradual unfolding and development; let us guard this germ, and tend it with utmost care; but let it be healthily encouraged; neither forcing it as a hot house plant, nor tearing open the buds before their time.

In an excellent article by Miss Muloch on CONIES—or feeble folk (*Prov.* xxx. 26)—she laments the indecision and weakness of so many *unhelpable* people, women more especially; and she traces this principally to the way so many people have of hedging their children about with external helps and vexatious restrictions; and who think that for a child to have a will of its own is a terrible enormity! But let Miss Muloch speak for herself.

'Why not recognise from earliest

infancy that "a will of one's own" is not a curse, but a great blessing to every human being? . . . So far from being repressed, this quality ought to be cultivated as much as possible. A year-old infant, who, if you hold out to it a handful of toys, knows exactly which toy it wants, snatches at it, grasps it; and, if losing, weeps after it, is a far more hopeful specimen of humanity than the irresolute child who never knows what it wants, nor how to keep what it has.'

'True, you will have to teach the small creature not to scratch and not to cry. You must help it to govern its own will, and even to learn the last lesson of true bravery, to resign its own will should necessity arise.

'And there is always a transition stage, when the will is strong and the reason weak, during which your child will give you a good deal of trouble, and you will have to exercise not only great patience, but that wise authority which superiors must always have over inferiors, for the inferiors' good—a very different thing from mere tyranny. But wait, and you will have your reward. If, instead of merely controlling a child, you can teach it to control itself, you will have made it into a higher human being, and benefited both it and yourself for the rest of its life.'

Surely these are true words. To help our children to be 'higher human beings,'—to mount one step further up the 'holy hill'—this is indeed an ambition worthy to be striven after with all our soul and strength.

Sunday School Services.

N.B.—It is intended that the children should be taught to repeat the responses from memory.

The services may, of course, be joined, if preferred.

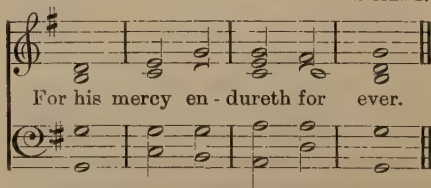
FOR THE OPENING.

HYMN.

Supt.—O give thanks unto the Lord for He is good.

Response :

ANCIENT.



To Him that by wisdom made the heavens.

For his mercy endureth for ever.

To Him that made great lights: the sun to rule by day; the moon and stars to rule by night.

For his mercy, etc.

Who remembereth us in our low estate, and bringeth us out of all our troubles.

For his mercy, etc.

Who giveth food to all flesh, and careth for all his children.

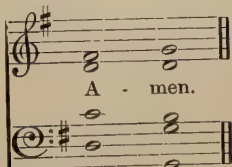
For his mercy, etc.

O give thanks unto the God of heaven.

For his mercy, etc.

PRAYER.

O God our Father, We trust Thee and love Thee for all the goodness with which Thou hast filled our lives. For home and school, for parents and friends and teachers, for wise words and pleasant hours. Let thy spirit be with us now. Help us to be thoughtful and attentive. Open our hearts to all good influences. Keep us from wrong and sin. And lead us in the ways of goodness and truth. We ask it for thy mercy's sake.



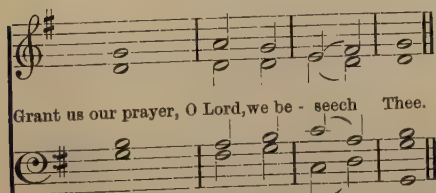
HYMN.

FOR THE CLOSING.

HYMN.

PRAYER.—O Lord our God, grant us this prayer that we pray unto Thee.

ANCIENT.



Bless our school. Make its scholars and teachers grow into one happy family. May its teachings sink into

our hearts and help us to become good men and women.

Grant us our prayer, etc.

Bless our homes and all whom we love.

Grant us our prayer, etc.

Pity all little children who are in sickness; all who have no home; all who are growing up in ignorance and sin.

Grant us our prayer, etc.

Bless us, too, O Father. May we love Thee well and serve Thee well. May we grow up wiser and better every day we live, and truer disciples of Jesus Christ.

Grant us our prayer, etc.

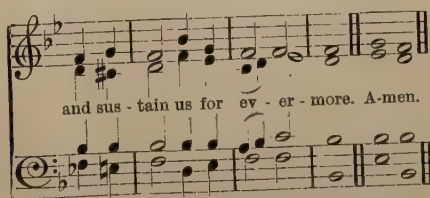
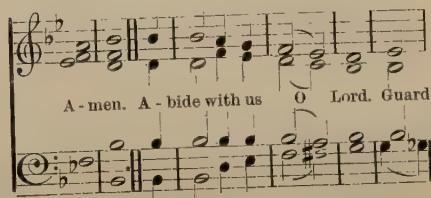
AMEN.

(As in Opening Service.)

HYMN.

LORD'S PRAYER.—Said together; then

J. W. TOSH.



WILLIAM JELLIE.

R 2



VICTOR ONE of the many useful hints gathered during our time of school visiting has been that of keeping a superintendent's diary. It is just a rough diary in which the superintendent puts down the hymns sung, any notice to be given out, etc., etc. In the school where I came across it there were two superintendents, one for the morning and one for the afternoon, and it was therefore especially valuable in this case, the diary acting as a means of communication between the two officers. It was kept in a special place, and each superintendent made a point of looking at it on first entering the school.

Another feature worthy of note, which I met with elsewhere, was the giving of a card of membership to every child on formally joining the school. It is to be hoped that the practice of accepting a scholar on his first appearance as a regular member is now a thing of the past; there ought to be some formality about it, so that boys and girls may feel that it is an honour to be enrolled. A visit to the parents, and three or four

weeks' good attendance on probation, should always be required first. When this is completed it is well to mark the admission to school membership in some special way; the giving of a hymn-book is one good method, and certainly the present of a little fancy card, bearing the name of the school, and its motto—if it has one—upon it, is an excellent addition. It should bear the signatures of the superintendent, class teacher and scholar.

The plan of reckoning every child who has attended the school, even though it has been but for once, as a member, is a great mistake; and though it is sometimes urged that it is excusable, because teachers like to think that their numbers are as large as possible, in truth it really tells against their school. The only real test, in statistics, lies in the average attendances. A school of 50 children, with an average attendance of 45, is in a far more satisfactory condition than one of 300 children with an average of 200. It is of the highest importance that all who have to do with the school should know its proportion of regular scholars; this

is impossible if the 'ins-and-outs'—a section that have to be reckoned with in every neighbourhood—are shuffled in among the others.

The *pros* and *cons* of mark-giving follow much the same lines as those of prize giving, which subject has been already treated in these pages by some of our practical teachers and superintendents (see pp. 83-88). Although marks seem to me to be most useful adjuncts, yet it is true that great care should be taken to get the teachers to give them, so far as possible, on the same scale. One teacher said: 'I always tell my boys that if I warn them three times, I shall take off their mark.' Naive, indeed, but scarcely wise, surely. It followed, as a natural sequence, that each lad thought he was entitled to be troublesome twice! It always appears to me that, seeing that one has so few means of discipline at command, the Sunday school teacher should make the withholding of a mark a really serious affair;—minor delinquencies, such as fidgetting and talking, ought to be able to be dealt with by a reprimand, unless carried to unusual lengths.

It may seem too trite to mention the importance of mutual conference where two teachers divide a class between them,—either one taking it in the morning and the other in the afternoon, or else on alternate Sundays

—but sometimes the neglect of this has been noted, and the consequences are most unfortunate. If a class has two teachers these should be in real sympathy with each other. They should chat over their methods and their pupils' idiosyncrasies, and make up their minds together as to plans to be adopted, and what subject each one will take. Otherwise the discipline of the class will suffer very materially, and in some cases one teacher has been pitted against the other in a most deplorable fashion.

It is a great pity that the method of taking round quarterly reports to parents is not more generally adopted. If the teachers make out their reports it enables them to 'gather up the threads,' as it were, and they *see* the record of their efforts; and that is educational. Then the teachers take the reports to the homes, and so get into touch with the parents; by this means they get a peep at the home life of the child, which will help them to understand its individual circumstances and characteristics.

In some schools a board is hung on the wall of the large room, having upon it the names of those scholars whose record has been quite good—no mark lost—for the previous month. This, we can readily understand, would act as an incentive to many children, and help them to do their best to resist their special temptations.

Illustrative Anecdotes.

Moses and the Angel.

'Withhold judgment of the Lord's doings until thou knowest all.'

THIS quaint old legend is taken from the Koran, and shows that the problem of evil was a puzzle to many good people living even in those times.

It is related how Moses so excited the admiration of his hearers with his eloquence that all were astonished, and he was tempted to ask the Lord if any man existed who was wiser than himself. Then God sent him to a certain rock, where He told him that he would meet with someone who did surpass him in wisdom.

And Moses took his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, and they came to the rock.

And there they found a servant of the Lord, one who had received the gifts of Wisdom and Mercy from above.

And Moses said unto him: 'May I follow thee, that thou mayest teach me part of that which thou hast been taught, for a direction unto me?'

He answered: 'Verily thou canst not bear with me: for how canst thou patiently suffer those things, the knowledge thereof thou dost not comprehend.'

Moses replied: 'Thou shalt find me patient, neither will I be disobedient unto thee in anything.'

The servant of God said: 'If thou

elect to follow me, see that thou ask me not concerning anything, until I shall declare the meaning thereof to thee.'

So they both went on by the sea-shore, until they came unto a ship; and the servant of the Lord took an axe, and knocked out two of her planks.

And Moses said unto him: 'Hast thou made a hole therein, that thou mightest drown those who are on board? Now hast thou done a strange thing!'

He answered: 'Did I not tell thee that thou couldest not bear with me?'

Moses was sorry in that he had spoken, and he said: 'Rebuke me not. I did but forget.'

Straightway leaving the ship, they proceeded until they met a youth; and the servant of the Lord took him and killed him.

Then said Moses: 'Hast thou slain an innocent person, without his having killed another? Now hast thou committed an unjust action.'

He answered: 'Did I not tell thee that thou couldest not bear with me?'

And Moses repented his hastiness, pleading to be allowed one more trial, saying: 'If I ask thee concerning anything hereafter, then suffer me not to accompany thee.' And the angel suffered him.

Again they went on their way, until they came to a certain city. And they asked food of the inhabitants thereof; but these refused

to receive them. And they found therein a wall, which was ready to fall down; and the servant of the Lord pushed it with his hand, and it fell.

Then said Moses: 'Well mightest thou receive payment for doing this!'

The angel turned to him, saying: 'This shall be the separation between us. Did I not tell thee that thou couldest not bear with me? But I will first declare unto thee the signification of those things which thou couldest not bear with patience. Know, then, that the vessel belonged to certain poor fishermen, and I was minded to render it unserviceable, because there was a king behind them, who took every *sound* ship by force.

'As to the youth, his parents were true believers, and we feared lest he, being perverse, should oblige them to suffer from his perverseness and ingratitude: wherefore we desired that their Lord might give them a more righteous child in exchange for him, and one more affectionate towards them.

'Then for the wall. Under it was a treasure which belonged to two orphan youths, hidden there by their father, who was a righteous man. Now they will find it; and having attained their full age, will take forth their treasure through the mercy of their God.

'And behold, all that I do, I do not of mine own will, but by God's commands.'

Courtesy.

'What virtue is so fitting for a knight,
Or for a lady whom a knight should love,
As Courtesy; to bear themselves aright
To all, of each degree, as doth behove?
For, whether they be placed high above,
Or low beneath, yet ought they well to
know
Their good; that none them rightly may
reprove
Of rudeness, for not yielding what they
owe;
Great skill it is such duties timely to
bestow.'

SPENSER.—*Faërie Queene.*

THE Venerable Bede, in his history (written about 700 A.D.), tells of the coming of Augustine from Rome to preach Christianity to the Britons. Already this faith had been introduced into the country, but Augustine wished to bring it into conformity with the usages of the Romish Church; and with this end in view he invited the British priests to hold a conference with him.

Now these good men were puzzled in their minds as to whether they should give up their old traditions and ancient customs at the bidding of Augustine; and therefore, before going to the conference, they sought the advice of a certain holy hermit, who bade them 'If he is a man of God, follow him.'

'How shall we know that?' asked they.

He replied: 'Our Lord said: Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.'

If, therefore, Augustine is meek and lowly of heart, it is to be believed that he has taken upon him the yoke of Christ, and offers the same to you. But if he is stern and haughty, it appears that he is not of God, nor are we to regard his words.'

They insisted again: 'And how are we to discern even this?'

'Do you contrive,' said the anchorite, 'that he may first arrive with his company at the place where the synod is to be held; and if at your approach he shall rise up to you, hear him submissively, being assured that he is the servant of Christ; but if he shall despise you, and not rise up to you, whereas you are more in number, let him also be despised by you.'

The priests did as they were directed; when they entered, Augustine was sitting on a chair, and *he did not rise*. Therefore, when he put before them the points which he desired them to accept, they answered that they would do none of those things, nor would they receive him as their archbishop; for they said among themselves: 'If he would not now rise up to us, how much more will he condemn us, as of no worth, if we begin to be under his subjection.'

Last Words.

'Read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to *weigh* and *consider*.'—BACON.

BEFORE closing the volume we should like to say a few words on the variety of opinion which is to be found in its pages. Whenever people think, the result of their thinking must differ, and it is only when, recognising this right of private judgment, we test what we have hitherto held as the best method, or the highest truth, by a comparison with the convictions and experiences of others, that we can grow to our full stature, and develop the highest that is within us.

For this reason, too, we have invited some of our practical superintendents and teachers to take part in our Teachers' Councils; and if any of our readers can be *our* HELPER during the next few months, by suggesting subjects for consideration, or methods of treatment likely to be acceptable for our next year's annual volume, we shall be glad to hear from them at Essex Hall.

THE EDITOR.



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